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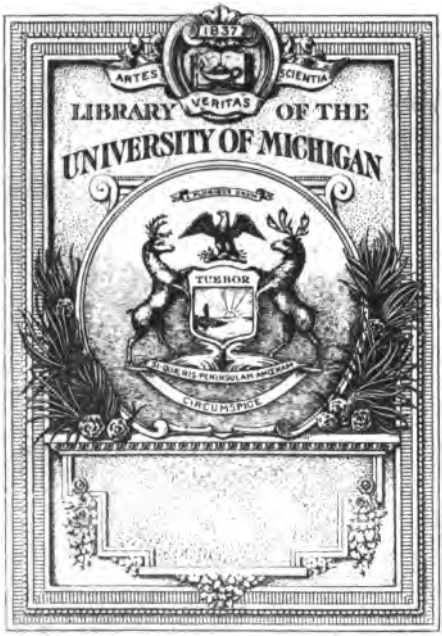

THE GIFT OF
Prof. F. N. Scott.

828
M17G

Mr. Fred Newton Scott
with best wishes from
Ruth Shartel McVoy

THE TRAITOR'S SON

THE TRAITOR'S SON

A NOVEL

BY

Mrs. RUTH SHARTEL McVOY

THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY
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Gift
Professor F. N. Scott
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12-13-28 LWB

TO

MY HUSBAND

PREFACE

The character Philip, as developed in this story, is purely fictitious. The record of Benedict Arnold's progeny seems to be well authenticated. He had no son named Philip, but Margaret Shippen bore him four sons, as follows: Edward Shippen, 1780-1813; James Robertson, 1781-1854; George, 1787-1828; and William Fitch, 1794-1828. In studying the life of the man who is best known in history as The Traitor, than whom there is scarcely a more pathetic figure in recorded time, it occurred to me that, however proud he might have been of his stalwart, loyal British soldier sons, it would have been considerable consolation and joy to him to have had at least one American son, American bred, and true to the cause for which The Traitor himself once fought. No man wholly forsakes a cause to which he has given the nobler part of his life,—rather the cause will not forsake him, but will remain forever in his affections. Hence the fictitious character, Philip.

R. S. McV.

Birmingham, Alabama,
September 2, 1915.

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PROEM

Beside an open window of a house on a quiet London side street a man sat in a comfortable armchair. It was June of the year 1801. In the tiny garden outside the roses were in bloom. The man smiled faintly as he sniffed their sweet fragrance.

He was not an old man in years, though his hair was white, and the well-worn Continental uniform hung loosely on his wasted frame. His features were large, well molded, and strong; upon his face was the expression of one who is weary of life; in his deep-set grey eyes smoldered still the fires of a once fearless manhood, but about him had settled the shadow of a miserable tragedy, against which he seemed to have struggled in vain, until at last he had resigned himself to await with what patience he could the coming of Death to release him. Whatever the future held for him, he felt, could be no worse than the shadow of disgrace that had overcast his life for so many years.

The man's slender fingers plucked nervously at the buttons of his coat, and at every sound outside in the hall he would glance at the door, with a look of mingled eagerness and dread. At length the door opened softly, and a woman entered. Placing a lovely, full-blown pink rose in his hand, she kissed his forehead gently. She was a beautiful woman,

in middle life, tall, slender, graceful, with delicate patrician features crowned with a mass of dull-white hair. She, too, had aged beyond her years, and above her brooded the same shadow of miserable tragedy.

They smiled into each other's eyes a moment, in perfect understanding, and through the tragedy in their lives their love shone as does the sun when it peeps for a moment through a dense cloud.

The woman spoke in a low, sweet voice vibrant with emotion.

"He has come!"

The man closed his eyes, and his hand grasped hers tightly; but he did not speak.

"Shall I stay with you, or will you see him alone?" she asked anxiously.

He straightened in his chair, releasing her hand resolutely.

"No; I must see him alone." After a pause he asked: "You—you have seen him?"

Tears glistened in her beautiful eyes.

"Yes; but only through the window. I was watching. He looks much like you. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

She went as softly as she had come. The door had closed behind her when the man reached out his arms, calling sharply:

"Margaret!"

She opened the door.

"Did you call?" she inquired.

He dropped his arms and looked toward the window.

"No," he replied. "Go. I am waiting."

He waited, the expression of mingled eagerness and dread on his face. There was a step outside in the passage; the door was being opened. The man closed his eyes for a moment, as in sudden pain; when he opened them a boy of fifteen stood there, his back to the closed door, a look of puzzled wonder on his young face.

They gazed at each other in silence,—the man and boy. As the woman had said, they were much alike: the same deep-set grey eyes, with smoldering fires in their depths,—in the man's, fires of the past; in the boy's, of the future; the same strong, well-molded features, the same high, intellectual forehead from which the white hair and the black were brushed back smoothly. The boy was evidently what the man had once been,—tall, lithe, fearless,—every movement and expression fraught with youth's eagerness and desire to taste the cup of life. The man bore the unmistakable mark of one who has drunk the cup of life to the dregs and found it a bitter draught.

Something passed between the two,—a sympathetic feeling, which the boy did not understand. He had never seen the man before, did not even know his name, yet he felt vaguely that he had known this man a long, long time.

The boy spoke first, coming a step or two nearer.

"You wished to see me, sir?"

The man did not answer at once; he looked out of the window, plucking the petals one by one from the rose in his hands. The boy watched him eagerly, feeling that when the last petal fell, then would the mystery of this strange man be revealed. When the man's nervous fingers plucked off the last pink petal and the stem dropped to the floor, he faced the boy resolutely.

"Yes," he said; "I wished to see you. I—am—your—father."

He spoke the words slowly, leaning forward to watch the effect on the boy's face. The boy's grey eyes widened in astonishment, and then, with a cry of joy, he was on his knees beside the chair, held close in the father's trembling arms.

A ray of joy and love and peace shot fleetingly across the man's face; then the boy looked inquiringly into his eyes. The father gathered together all his strength for this moment,—the moment that he had both longed for and feared. He held the two firm, boyish hands in his, looking squarely into the upturned, eager face.

"My son, do you think you could love a father who had committed a great sin?"

"Why, sir, I suppose a boy always loves his father,—doesn't he?—no matter what happens. But you have not,——"

"I have committed the one sin that man finds unpardonable. I—I"—he faltered, then went on, speaking with great effort—"I was unfaithful to my country."

He shrank back among his pillows; for the look on the boy's face had struck him like a blow. To a frank, fearless boy of fifteen, treachery was indeed an unpardonable sin.

The man continued,—a note of weariness in his voice:

"I have been an exile, an outcast,—despised and scorned wherever I go. At first I did not care, and then came remorse; and since its coming I have suffered untold agony. When you were born I wanted you reared in my native country, in ignorance of your father and his sin. I sent you to your Uncle Roger, in Connecticut. Since the day of your birth I have rested great faith in you. You are the child of my remorse. It was hard to send you away; for we loved you,—your mother and I."

The boy lifted his white face.

"The lady?" he asked breathlessly.

"She is your mother, and the best woman in all the world. She has loved me and stood by me, though she hated unspeakably the thing I did. Without her, I should long ago have added self-destruction to my other sin. Your Uncle Roger pledged himself to spare no pains to teach you truth and honor, and, above all, self-control. I am depending on you to rehabilitate our name in the land I betrayed. You are young to take this burden from me, but my time has come to go, and your young shoulders seem strong and manly. This is why I have sent for you,—why you have come all the way from America. Will you pledge me this:

to serve your country, even with your very life; to be always a brave, faithful soldier, and to let absolutely nothing,—not even the woman you love,—come between you and your honor and duty? Will you do this, my son? Will you promise?"

The boy bowed his head, and without hesitation promised, word for word, as his father asked; his voice was steady, but his hands trembled, for it seemed to him that he was accepting his father's guilt as his own.

"It is a poor heritage to leave you, my son. I would rather have a clean, honest name to give you than great riches. I hope you will not wholly despise me, my boy. I do not try to excuse myself,—there is no excuse for me,—but if mental and physical suffering can pay the penalty, then have I paid it."

He drew a yellowed parchment from his coat.

"This is your birth certificate. No,—no; do not open it here. I could not bear that."

The boy stooped impulsively, and kissed the blue-veined, nervous hand. In his eyes were pity and compassion. The next moment he was gone.

When the door closed behind him the father sank back among his pillows, a storm of sobs shaking his wasted form.

Outside, the boy opened the yellowed parchment slowly,—a strange dread clutching his heart. When he read the words written there in faded ink, he stood for a second dazed; then, dropping to his knees, he covered his face with his hands. He heard

the soft rustle of skirts, felt a pair of tender arms about him, then he looked up into the sweet, sad face crowned with the mass of dull-white hair.

"Philip, my son," the woman's lips whispered softly.

"Mother!" The boy spoke the unfamiliar word hesitatingly.

"This is a heavy burden for you to bear, my son; but there is One who will help you to bear it. He has helped me these many years; without Him, I would have given up long ago." She slipped a small ivory-bound book into the boy's hands. "This is the Book of books, without which a man is capable of any sin; with which he can withstand any storm. This is what your father has needed always, and has refused to accept. Keep the Book ever with you, read it often, and when temptation comes to you, as it will and does to every man, with God's help, you can keep to the right way."

Philip opened the little Book and read, written in a neat, childish hand:

Margaret Shippen.
Philadelphia, Anno Domini 1770.

And below, in fresh ink:

To my son Philip,
With a mother's love and prayers.
In the words of sweet Will Shakespeare:
"This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

"I wish I might keep you with me here, Philip," said the mother, stroking his dark hair. "My heart has been longing for you these fifteen years."

"And mine for you," returned the boy. "It is hard," he went on, with a sigh, "to leave a mother you have just found, when you have been longing for one all your life."

"Your Aunt Hannah is good to you?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes; she is the best aunt in the world; but—she is not my mother."

"Philip, my boy, I can't let you go!" The mother arms held him close.

After a little the boy released himself gently and stood up, holding her slender hands in his. He had knelt there a helpless boy, with a burden greater than he could bear; he arose a man, with his first taste of the cup of life.

"But I must go, Mother. I have promised, and it is my duty. He is my father, and it is right that I should accept his burden."

"From the very hour of your birth," said his mother, "your father has depended on you. He firmly believes that if you give your service and life to the country he betrayed, the score will be evened. I do not know. Only God has mercy to forgive a traitor, man has not."

"I have promised," repeated the boy, "and I will do my best. I wish I might take you back to the States with me. Some day, when I am older, will you come?"

She held the eager face between her hands, smiling sadly.

"I shall not live until that day, my son. When your father goes, I shall not stay long, I am sure. And then, the States are too full of sad memories for me; I could not go back now. But some day, when you are older, you will find the one woman you will love even more than one loves a mother; and I pray God you may be happy together, my son."

THE TRAITOR'S SON

CHAPTER I

THE ROAD TO ST. STEPHENS

On a sultry afternoon in July, in the year 1813, a small party of travelers was riding along the road toward St. Stephens on the Tombigbee. They had come from a three days' Indian festival at Tookabatcha—the Creeks' Annual Green Corn Dance. In the party were Capt. Philip Arnold, official representative from the government fort at St. Stephens; the Reverend Mr. Lee, from the city of Washington; his niece, Miss Felice Lee, and three servants: Jim, the cook; Sougo, Captain Arnold's half-breed Indian boy, and Judy, Miss Lee's maid.

The good old bishop, unable himself to make the trip, had sent his friend Lee into the Southeast Territory to look over the situation from a religious viewpoint, and to see what might be done in that region in the way of extending the Kingdom of God and the Methodist Church, by evangelizing the settlers and, more especially, the Creek Indians.

Mr. Lee was delighted when his niece had announced her desire to accompany him. He fairly idolized her and could scarcely bear to have her

out of his sight for any length of time; then, too, he was glad to get her away from Washington for a while into this wilderness of the Southeast.

Felice's mother at sixteen had married, regardless of her brother's protest, a young French nobleman, and after a few years of cruelty and neglect on the part of young Henri du Vallon and his relatives,—who never forgave her for marrying Henri,—she had died, leaving her child in her brother's care. Henri was killed soon afterward in a duel, and the relatives were glad enough not to have the child on their hands.

So Mr. Lee had carefully reared and educated Felice, and had been well pleased with the result, until the previous winter, when the girl's cousin, Mrs. Dolly Madison, had insisted that, as Miss Felice was past seventeen, it was high time she make her appearance in society. And Mrs. Madison, being a woman, had her way; so the butterfly emerged, and all Washington gasped in amazement. She was brilliant, witty, perfectly at ease, and marvelously beautiful,—a most charming combination of French vivacity, Irish wit, and American beauty. At once the little capital and half the country were at her feet.

Her uncle,—remembering his lovely, wilful sister and the gay, reckless Frenchman who had ruined her life,—trembled for the girl's future happiness, as daily he noted fresh, unmistakable signs of the mother's beauty and wilfulness and of the father's gayety and irresponsibility.

So he was glad to have her away from the glare and homage of the capital, in the quiet of this Southern wilderness. And the young lady herself had found much to interest her in the wild, beautiful country; in the rough, fearless frontiersman; in the women, brave and calm, though surrounded by constant dangers and hardships, and, most of all, in the Indians, painted and bedecked in fascinating ugliness.

Since morning the little party had come through the fertile valleys of the Alabama, green with fields of waving corn, in honor of which the Indians had been celebrating; across the river itself,—a broad, smooth, silvery riband winding through the fields; on through forests of oak and hickory and stately pines, fording the many clear, little streams, that bubbled and sang their way southwestward to the Tombigbee.

All the afternoon Captain Arnold had ridden beside Mr. Lee, discussing at length the war with England and the troubles with the Indians. Miss Felice had listened for a while, but now she flicked her horse impatiently. She understood very well what the two men were discussing; and when she chose she could talk politics as well as a man, but she was warm and tired and just then she did not choose. Perhaps, too, her impatience was directed toward the quiet, reserved young soldier, who, beyond being courteous and thoughtful as to her comfort, had seemed unconscious of her presence.

"We are going to have war with the Creeks, and

very soon, too," the young man was saying. "Tecumseh stirred the Creeks to join his Confederacy on his trip through this territory last year. They have been on the verge of an outbreak ever since. The British at Pensacola, though they have done nothing openly as yet, are secretly encouraging the Indians to fight. But for the restraining influence of Big Warrior and Red Eagle, two of their most powerful chiefs, they would have gone on the warpath long ago. And they cannot be held down much longer; they are only waiting for an excuse,—the merest trivial thing will suffice,—to make an attack on us. When they find that excuse it means fight to the finish. We must drive them out, or be driven out by them. There is not room in the Territory for the two races."

"Why could they not be converted to Christianity, and live here in peace with the white settlers?" asked Mr. Lee. "The moral courage and force which they show in their superstitious way, their faith and devotion to the Great Spirit,—could these but be turned to our faith, the Indians would be a great power for good."

"That would take years," replied Captain Arnold. "The Creeks are not easily reached. This question must be settled at once. They have been supreme here for generations; they must have all or nothing. One cannot blame them for fighting; the white settlers are aggressive and have pushed into the very heart of the lands that have belonged to the Indians for generations. The Creeks must fight

or be gradually driven out. And if they go to war now, unless the government sends us aid, I fear we cannot conquer them,—they are too strong. The authorities at Washington seem to take little interest in affairs down here."

"It is not so much from lack of interest as from lack of time," Mr. Lee explained. "Their hands are full, with the war with Great Britain. That war is a white elephant on the hands of the administration. Mr. Madison is a splendid statesman, and no one could do better as a Peace President; but as a War President,—well, he himself acknowledges that he is a failure." He paused, then asked: "You think the Church cannot accomplish much in the territory at present?"

"I think little can be done, either for the settlers or for the Indians, until this question of possession has been settled once for all. The sooner the better. But I am not anxious. I do not like bloodshed, and I have lived here long enough to know that war with the Indians will mean unspeakable horrors, great loss of life, and much suffering. No, I am not anxious to fight."

"And you a soldier? I thought soldiers lived only to fight," remarked Mr. Lee.

"A man does not always love the work he must do," said Arnold. "Except, perhaps, a man of God like you. A minister cannot be successful unless he loves his work. Had I my way, I would travel the path of peace and try to serve humanity, —not slaughter it in war. I would like to be a sur-

geon; I have spent some study on surgery and find it work after my own heart. I have always thought the two callings honored by the Son of God when He was on earth,—preaching the gospel, and healing the sick,—the two greatest services to humanity. Of course, any man can serve God and humanity, if he will. But a minister, or a doctor, who does his work well, *must* serve them."

"Then why have you chosen the soldier's life?"

"It was not of my own choosing. Circumstances have forced me to be a soldier, and my life is pledged to serve my country. But I do not enjoy a soldier's work."

"Colonel Caller tells me you are called the bravest soldier in the Territory," replied Mr. Lee.

"Oh, I am no coward," said the young man seriously. "When I must fight, I do my best; but I do not like it."

The girl, with some degree of interest, had been watching the young man as he talked: the well-built, lithe figure, riding at ease; the strong, well-molded features, bearing the marks of refinement and good breeding,—a type she had found rare in this wild southern country. She fell to wondering about him as she rode.

Suddenly the young soldier turned in his saddle, looking at her with steady grey eyes.

"If you are tired, madame," he said courteously, "we will stop here for the night. It is two hours yet to sundown; but the day has been warm, and you

are not accustomed to riding. We must not weary you too much. Shall we stop here?"

"As you please, Captain Arnold. But I must confess that I am rather tired."

"Then here it shall be." And he swung himself from the saddle and lifted her down.

They had stopped beside a small stream in the midst of the piney woods. The air was cooler; a little breeze had sprung up, laden with the fragrance of the pines; somewhere above a robin was singing cheerily, and the water sparkled and rippled over the sand and rocks. It was a charming spot to camp, and Miss Lee sighed gratefully as she walked about among the trees, glad of the exercise after the long hours on horseback.

"Come heah an' bave yo' face in dis col' watah, Missy; yo' looks plum melted an' wo' out, po' chile," called fat Judy sympathetically, though in truth it was Judy who was "plum melted an' wo' out."

Jim busied himself stretching skins between saplings, to make a shelter for the lady, and then started a fire to cook supper.

"Sougo!" Captain Arnold called to his Indian boy, who had been riding well in the rear. The boy approached slowly.

"Sougo!" the young man called again sharply. The boy usually was all eagerness to do the bidding of his Big White Chief. As he approached, the cause of his reluctance was disclosed; perched behind him on his pony was a little Creek girl, and

over his shoulder peeped her bright-eyed, pretty face.

"Sougo!" said Arnold, in surprise. "Come here." The boy slipped from his pony, and came, leading the child by the hand.

"She my sister. She go with us. She like Miss White Lady much. You let her go?"

"You take her straight back where she came from, and don't lose any time," the young man ordered sternly. "Don't you know you will have the whole Creek Confederacy after our scalps?"

The little girl began to whimper, and the boy continued anxiously: "She be very, very good,—work hard. Warriors no care she gone. Creek father no like her 'cause she have white father same as me. Get heap fire water; beat her all time. He no care she gone. He glad."

"I am sorry, Sougo. I would like to let her go with you, but it is quite impossible. You must take her back at once."

Miss Lee, who had been listening with interest to this conversation, came forward now, putting her arm about the little girl. "May I ask why it is necessary to send this child back to be beaten by a drunken step-father?" she said indignantly.

"The Indians are in a dangerous mood just now, Miss Lee," Arnold replied. "They are waiting for the least excuse to attack the settlers, and they could ask for no better one than that a party of white people had stolen this child. Her mother is the wife of Grey Wolf, the Chief of the Clan of the

Wind, and no matter how much he may hate and mistreat his step-daughter, he would undoubtedly resent our taking her away."

"But, if what the boy says is true," responded Miss Lee, "surely the Indian will be glad to get rid of her." Then, caressing and petting the child, she said tenderly: "Stop crying, you poor little thing; you shall stay right here with me. I am not afraid of your Indian father."

Captain Arnold watched them with troubled eyes. He was sympathetic by nature, and could not bear to make any one suffer,—least of all, a child,—yet he knew only too well what the consequences were likely to be if he permitted the child to remain. He thought of his duty to the hundreds of settlers, their wives and children, and his lips tightened resolutely. He must do his duty regardless of what the young lady from Washington might think.

"I am very sorry indeed," he said firmly, "but the child must go back."

The young girl looked at him over the child's dark head, scorn in her lovely brown eyes, and replied:

"I think you are heartless to sacrifice a poor little child who has come to you for protection, because you are afraid of a lot of stupid, harmless, painted Indians."

Captain Arnold flushed; he did not enjoy being called a coward.

"If I had only myself to think of," said he, "I would not hesitate; but it is better for one Creek child to suffer occasional mistreatment by her step-

father than for hundreds of innocent white women and children to suffer and die. When the Creeks are on the warpath, they are neither stupid nor harmless. I prefer not to be responsible for an act which might start them. You would scarcely believe me, should I tell you of the terrible cruelty with which they treat the helpless women and children when they are on the warpath." Then, turning to the Indian boy, he said:

"It is late now; you may wait until morning, Sougo; but at daybreak you will start for Tookabatcha with the girl."

Sougo knew when that determined look came into his chief's grey eyes that it was useless to argue.

Miss Lee, followed by the little Sehoy, turned away scornfully, and poured into Judy's ears an angry rating of Captain Arnold.

"Now, Missy, bettah min' yo' own bizness, an' let dis heah chile go 'long back whar she belong. We doan want dem long, lanky red Injuns gallopin' roun' heah atter our sca'ps."

A little later, Captain Arnold,—watering Mark, his big bay horse, at the little stream,—overheard some words not meant for his ears. Mr. Lee had reproved his niece for her rudeness to the young captain.

"But I don't care, Uncle Maurice, I would be ashamed to be afraid of Indians, or anything else, if I was a great, strong man. I don't like him, anyway; he is so dreadfully serious. Why doesn't he

ever laugh and act human? He is about as cheerful as an animated gravestone."

"Felice!" her uncle said reprovingly. "He is a gentleman, and has been most kind and courteous to us, and has taken much pains and trouble for our comfort on this trip."

"I think," he continued, after a pause, "perhaps his existence here amid constant danger has made him realize the seriousness of life." His tone implied that one young person of his acquaintance did not in the least realize the seriousness of life.

"Yes, or perhaps some deep, dark sin is eating away his soul," the girl suggested, in tragic whisper. "Or—perhaps—something is—wrong—with—his—liver."

"Felice, I am astonished at you!"

"Anyway," she continued, tossing her head, "whatever is troubling him,—soul, mind, or body,—he doesn't need to be so melancholy. It is uncanny in one so young. O Uncle Maurice, there is the queerest little, round, red sunburned spot on your head just where your hat and your hair failed to meet!"

A smile spread over his smooth, round face,—his head was bald, save for a fringe at the back,—as he jokingly responded:

"If you would let me, I would get a wig."

"No, no; you would be horrid in a wig!" She kissed lightly the sunburned spot. "And, besides, I couldn't bear to have you wearing some dead man's hair on your head."

She saw signs of the impending lecture on levity, and slipped away among the trees, to save her uncle the time and trouble of repeating the lecture, which she already knew quite well from having heard it so often.

Mark had finished drinking, and was nosing among the pine needles to find some blades of grass, or something else green. His master leaned idly against a tree, smiling to himself, as he watched the graceful, girlish figure moving about in the woods, with the little Sehoy, like a faithful shadow, at her heels.

"Perhaps I am too serious and melancholy," he mused thoughtfully. "Life really is a serious matter to me; but I suppose there is no need to be a gravestone yet. I believe the young lady is homesick for her friends; it must all be very strange to her down here. I suppose I ought to try to make it a little more pleasant for her. I must have a sense of humor somewhere. I used to have. I wonder—now——"

A purposeful light twinkled in Philip Arnold's grey eyes, and he whistled softly to himself as he gave Mark a measure of meal for his supper.

CHAPTER II

A YOUNG MAN'S HUMOR

At supper, and afterward, Miss Felice watched Captain Arnold, a puzzled expression in her brown eyes. The sense of humor had been aroused and was fairly tipsy with the joy of living. She had intended being very cool and distant,—after their encounter of the afternoon,—perhaps even to ignore his existence entirely; but she could not long resist this gay-hearted, witty, altogether charming man, so different from the grave, preoccupied Captain Arnold of the past few weeks.

Mr. Lee, after his first feeling of amazement, chuckled approvingly. Evidently the young man had overheard the girl's opinion of him and was determined to change it. Judy held her fat sides and fairly shook the forest. "He sho' am a fine, smart young man," she chuckled to Jim, the cook. Even little Sehoy laughed, too, though she understood little English.

After the simple meal of corned beef and dried beans (cooked in a kettle over the fire), rye bread and coffee, Captain Arnold arose.

"Miss Lee," he asked, smiling, "are you too tired for a walk? If you care for sunsets, there is a view up here I would like to show you."

"I am quite rested now, thank you; and would like the walk," the girl answered, returning his smile frankly,—all the anger and resentment gone.

"Mr. Lee, would you care to go?" inquired Arnold. But Mr. Lee, being rather tired, and feeling that he was not exactly needed, declined, preferring to rest on the soft pine needles, smoking his pipe.

"We must climb this hill," the young man said to Miss Lee; "there is no path, but I think we can make it."

He took her hand in his, and together they climbed, jesting and laughing as they went. Judy, who never permitted her young "Missy" out of sight, clambered after them, with aching bones, muttering to herself unpleasant things about foolish young folks who wanted to climb mountains after a hard day's riding, just to see a common, everyday sunset. The minister, watching from below until they disappeared, sighed as he smoked. "He is a splendid, manly young fellow," he mused. "I wish the child—— But, ah me, women are strange creatures!"

"Can you make this last step? It is high. Give me both hands. Now!" Captain Arnold lifted the girl lightly up beside him on a large flat rock, the very summit of the hill they had been climbing. Judy declined to take the last step, and settled herself below to wait.

Felice,—one hand still unconsciously in Arnold's,—caught her breath sharply, and gazed in silent wonder at the view spread out before her.

The sun, like a great golden ball, was sinking in the west; the sky was brilliant with scarlet and purple and gold; and the valley below lay green,—green everywhere. There were tall, stately pines, and here and there a clump of oak and hickory, and in the low places the graceful, feathery cypress. At the foot of the flat rock on which they stood a little spring bubbled forth and flowed rippling and sparkling down the hill; thick vines covered the ground, clambering over the rocks; here and there a flower peeped its tiny face through the dense foliage.

Arnold watched with pleasure the girl's exquisite, appreciative face.

"Ah," sighed Felice, "it is beautiful!" Then, blushing, she withdrew her hand.

They stood in silence while the golden ball disappeared and the brilliant sky faded to misty blue and pink and lavender.

From below came the call of the first whippoorwill.

"Whip-poor-will!" Arnold answered. "Are you acquainted with the birds?" he asked.

"Not many; but I love them," replied Miss Lee.

"They make excellent friends," continued the young man; "much better, sometimes, than people. I have learned to know and love them; the woods here in the Territory are alive with them." Then, with wonderful accuracy, he whistled the loud, cheery carol of the robin; the lark's sweet, low warble, the harsh scream of the jay; the "conk-er-ee"

of the blackbird; the oriole's plaintive whistle, and ended with the mocking bird's medley.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, Missy, how yo' all ketch all dem birds up dah?" called Judy, roused from a catnap by the concert.

"Come up and see!" laughed Felice; but Judy was already napping again.

Sitting by her side on the flat rock, Captain Arnold entertained the girl for an hour, telling her interesting stories of his life in the Territory, wonderful tales of Lamochattee, the Red Eagle, bravest of all Creek chiefs, and of Capt. Sam Dale, the Daniel Boone of the South. And then they drifted to other subjects,—music, literature, art, politics, —and each surprised the other with a thorough knowledge and understanding of these topics. Of himself, and his past life before coming to the Territory, the man said little, and the girl wondered as she listened. He was a gentleman, at least, and handsome; though he wore the rough breeches and shirt of a hunter, she felt that he would be quite at home in satin smallclothes and ruffles; and his face and conversation stamped him as a man of her own class,—well educated, well bred, and more fascinating than any man she had ever known. And a few hours before she had labeled him a "gravestone"!

In truth, the young man had rather surprised himself. Never before had he exerted himself to be entertaining to a woman, but he had to admit to himself that he had succeeded fairly well. There had, of course, been girls in his boyhood and school-

days. Since he had been in the Territory he had met some at the forts, and in Mobile; but none to compare with this one. No other girl had ever aroused his interest.

He gazed at Miss Lee's lovely face; at the golden-brown curls falling about it in rebellious profusion; the mouth like a scarlet rosebud, always ready to smile; but most of all the brown eyes attracted him,—large and innocent, and laughing. In their depths he saw the latent powers of love and hate, of selfishness and sacrifice, of joy and sorrow: the soul of a young girl reared in happiness and affection, sleeping peacefully, until a great love, or a great sorrow, or a great temptation, should come to arouse it to fight life's battles, to win or lose. He felt himself wishing that he might shield her from everything but love and happiness, and fight life's battles for her.

The moon came up early, shedding a soft, tender light over the valley; the moonbeams danced in the sparkling water of the spring. Judy, drowsing below, found her seat becoming very hard and uncomfortable.

"Missy," she called, "does yo' an' Marse Cap'n know hit am gittin' pow'ful late?"

"Yes, Judy; we are coming in a moment," came the answer.

The moment stretched into half an hour, and Judy called again.

"Yes, Judy; just as soon as Captain Arnold finishes this story."

Judy yawned away another half-hour.

"Dat story sho' do hab a long endin'!" Judy rose decisively. "Missy Fayleese Lee, foh the third an' las' time, is—yo'—comin'?" Felice jumped to her feet, laughing, and said to Arnold:

"When Judy speaks in that tone of voice, memory recalls what followed in my younger days, and I always obey." Turning to the negro woman, she replied:

"Very well, Judy; start on. We are coming." Then she remarked to her escort: "Captain Arnold, I thank you for a most pleasant evening."

"It has been more delightful to me than it could possibly have been to you," he replied gallantly.

"And, Captain Arnold," said she blushingly, "I must apologize for my words this afternoon; they were quite inexcusable. You have been so kind to us. Will you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive," replied the young man. "One always has the right to say what one thinks."

"But I did not think it," she interrupted. "I know you have a good reason for sending Sehoy back, and would not do so unless you were convinced of the necessity. I am sure you are right, and I should not have questioned your judgment."

"Would you really care to keep the child?"

"Not if you disapprove. She is a dear little thing and was very faithful and devoted to me at Tookabatcha. I became quite attached to her."

"You may keep her, if you wish."

"But the Indians——"

"I think that perhaps I was overcautious. Doubtless Sougo is right,—her father will be glad to get rid of her. Anyway, keep her if you wish. I am in a reckless mood to-night,—in a mood to give you anything in my power. I am even willing to try for the moon, if you like."

"Thank you, sir. It is a habit of mine to wish for unattainable things, but I have not yet begun to cry for the moon."

"When you do, let me know. I will do my best to get it for you."

Together they descended to the little camp, and the touch of her hand in his thrilled him and set his heart to pounding in his breast. Judy awaited them before the tent of skins stretched on saplings.

"Uncle Maurice tells me we once crossed the Atlantic together. Do you remember?"

"Very well indeed. I was fifteen, and was returning from London. You were six or seven, and your uncle was bringing you from France; you ruled the ship, from captain to cabin boy. Every man on board was your willing slave."

"I do not remember. I must have been a dreadful little tyrant in those days. Judy often tells me I was."

"Ain't outgrow'd it yit, neder," Judy added to herself.

"You were a very beautiful one." His eyes added that neither had she outgrown that. Then he spoke audibly: "We called you the 'Little Queen of the

Golden Hair.' And I was very proud indeed when you chose me your Knight of Honor; you seemed at first rather to favor the cabin boy for that exalted office."

"Captain Arnold, just to satisfy my woman's curiosity, will you tell me where you have been keeping all the wit and wisdom you have displayed this evening?"

He smiled whimsically.

"Where few people keep their possessions,—in a gravestone."

Felice flushed, but her reply came quickly:

"You know, sir, since the beginning of time it has been woman's undisputed privilege to change her mind. This evening I have availed myself of that privilege. Good night, Captain Arnold, and pleasant dreams."

He kissed her hand, and stood smiling long after the flap of the tent had closed behind her. There had come to him suddenly the memory of his mother's words: "Some day you will find the one woman you will love even more than one loves a mother, and I pray God you may be happy together." And he knew as he stood there,—bareheaded in the moonlight,—that he had found the one woman. He realized now the meaning of his mother's words. The dozen years since he had heard them had changed him very little; he was taller and stronger, but about him was the same air of manly boyishness, the same earnest desire to do his duty, and bear bravely the burden that his dying father had thrust upon him.

With a sigh, he seated himself on the yielding pine needles beside a tree and lighted his pipe.

"At least," he said softly, "I am no longer an animated gravestone." And he dreamed, as he smoked, of a pair of limpid brown eyes with a woman's unawakened soul in their depths. All was silent, save the gurgling of the little stream and the occasional call of some distant night bird. The moon and the stars shone tranquilly through the trees overhead.

CHAPTER III

THE ROSE-TRIMMED BONNET

Just before daybreak the next morning the camp was aroused by the rapid approach of a horseman, and through the dim light Arnold recognized the tall, gaunt figure of Capt. Sam Dale, who, reining in his pony, without dismounting, said hurriedly:

"Arnold, what the devil did you mean by carryin' off Old Grey Wolf's daughter? Didn't you know that would make trouble?"

"I knew nothing about it until last night when we camped. She is my boy Sougo's sister, and he brought her along without my knowledge, keeping her out of sight. I am sorry. I was afraid of trouble."

"Old Grey Wolf, who is one of the leaders of the war party, raised a big row. Of course, they had reached the fightin' point, anyhow, so one excuse was as good as another. After all the whites were gone from the assembly yesterday, the chiefs began talking war. Red Eagle and Big Warrior tried to hold 'em down, but 'twan't no use, the braves had a bit too much fire water in 'em. And then Old Grey Wolf begun howling 'bout you stealin' his daughter, and that was the last straw. Big Warrior won't

fight; he left. But Red Eagle will stay with 'em; he's mighty loyal for a half-breed, and the bravest chief they've got. Last night they painted the war clubs red, and I heard 'em dancin' their fiendish war dances, so I knowed what was up."

"That means war for sure," Arnold said gravely. "I have been expecting this for some time, but I have been hoping against hope we might avert it in some way. How did you get here so soon?"

Dale smoothed his pony's shaggy mane.

"Paddy's a good traveler, and we're carryin' light weight,—empty stomachs and no baggage."

"You have made good time. Get down and have breakfast."

"I can't lose no time; I've got to warn the settlers. You better get to St. Stephens as quick as you can. I reckon they can't catch you, they ain't got a horse to equal Paddy, but you know the red devils travel fast when they're after scalps!" He leaned over and continued in a low voice:

"Tell Colonel Caller that a party of warriors have gone to Pensacola; the British have offered them guns and ammunition and five dollars apiece for scalps. Tell him, if he wants to stop 'em on the way back, I'll meet him early to-morrow across the Alabama, with all the men I can muster."

"I will tell him, Sam; and I am sure he will meet you there. We are greatly obliged to you, and will make all possible haste to reach the fort by noon. I wish you would eat something."

"Much obliged, but I ain't got time. Good-bye."

And wheeling the sturdy little Paddy, he rode away as he had come.

Arnold turned to his party that had gathered at a little distance, listening.

"You heard?" he asked. "The Creeks are on the warpath; there is little chance that they can overtake us, but it is wise to hurry. I don't want Miss Lee to find out just how far from stupid and harmless Indians can be."

"I am sure they could be only stupid and harmless, with Captain Arnold to defend us," the girl said to her uncle; and Arnold did not know just how to accept this rather doubtful compliment.

When they had eaten a hurried breakfast, they started on their way, leaving Sougo to ride behind and listen for any signs of the Indians. For several hours they rode on; the air was cool and pleasant along the pine-shaded road; the birds were singing; now and then Captain Arnold answered the joyful call of a warbler, or a lark. He and the girl rode side by side. She could not complain now of any indifference on his part, and she found him quite as interesting and fascinating by daylight as he had been by moonlight. He seemed overflowing with joy,—like the birds he imitated,—intoxicated by a pair of brown eyes that sparkled in a setting of beauty and smiles and golden brown hair.

He seemed to forget the danger that might overtake them at any moment; the bloody war that was sure to result, with the Creeks on the warpath, and the duty that would call him into danger and

probable death. He looked at Felice and found her more beautiful than ever, in her brown cambric dress with the soft white fichu, and a rose-trimmed bonnet, from under which her lovely face peeped out demurely.

"That bonnet," the young man suggested, "is very pretty, but—rather in the way; I can't see your face."

With a gay laugh she pushed the bonnet off; and it hung by the ribbons carelessly down her back.

She, too, somehow was very happy, and began to sing in a clear, flutelike voice:

"What's this dull town to me?
Robin's not near,—
He whom I wished to see,
Wished for to hear!"

She paused midway of the verse, and the young man completed it in a deep, clear, musical voice:

"Where's all the joy and mirth,
Made life a heaven on earth?
Oh, they're all fled with thee,
Robin Adair!"

"I did not know singing was one of your accomplishments," said she.

Together they sang the verse:

"Come to my heart again,
Robin Adair;
Never to part again,
Robin Adair;
And if thou still art true,
I will be constant too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair."

A low, sharp whistle pierced the air.

Arnold paused in his singing, startled. It was Sougo's cry of warning. The boy came riding like the wind.

"Warriors!" he cried. "Maybe three,—maybe more,—comin' heap fast."

Arnold knew there was no time to be lost. Dismounting, he said hurriedly:

"It is two miles to the ford. There is no possible chance for us to reach it before they overtake us. If there are only three, we can manage them, but there may be more. We will turn the horses loose,—they will make straight for the ford,—the Indians will follow until they discover we are not on them; then they will come back to find us."

The horses, relieved of their riders, galloped on down the road. Arnold, with a coil of rope on his shoulder, led the way through the woods. A half-mile walk brought the party out upon the top of a bluff two hundred feet above the river, a mile and a half up the river from the ford.

Arnold tied one end of his rope securely to a tree, and dropped the other over the bluff, watching anxiously to see how far it would reach. The end hung against a shelving rock more than halfway down. He straightened up with a sigh of relief.

"It's all right,—that rock is the floor of a small cave running back several feet into the bluff. It will be a safe hiding place for us. Go ahead, Sehoy."

The little Indian girl, without hesitation, grasped

the rope and climbed swiftly down the bluff, landing safely on the rock below.

"Now, Jim, you help Judy down!"

"I ain't gwine,—I ain't gwine!" cried Judy, terrified by one glance down the steep bluff.

"Come on, heah! I ain't gwine let you fall. Ketch hol', now, les' yo' wants ter stay heah an' git sca'ped," Jim urged.

After much persuasion, Judy resigned herself, grasped the rope, and did as Jim told her. Mr. Lee went down next. Then Arnold turned to the girl, with the question:

"You are not afraid?"

"No," she answered bravely; "I am not afraid."

"Put your arms about my neck and hold tight. Now!"

With the girl clinging to him, he climbed carefully down the steep incline, holding to the rope; she closed her eyes and held her breath until he set her safely down on the rock below.

Sougo untied the rope, and with marvelous agility climbed unaided down the bluff, clinging to small ledges, or here and there a shrub or tree. The little cave was light and fairly comfortable, and would afford them a safe shelter and hiding place. Later, when there would be no danger of the Indians finding them, Sougo could climb down to the river and go to the fort for help.

"I don't believe they can find us here," said Arnold; "and, if they do, we can shoot before they can climb down."

But a moment later a war whoop from above told them that by some means the warriors had located their hiding place. Sougo found a little crack where he could watch the Indians without being seen. After watching a moment, he crept back into the cave, holding up five fingers.

"Grey Wolf, and four warriors. Me think they come down here."

"Watch, Sougo; and when they start down we will go out on the rock and fire," replied Arnold. Then turning to Mr. Lee, he said: "You take the nearest one. I wonder how they found us."

Something thrown from above landed just then on the rock,—a direct answer to his question. It was Felice's rose-trimmed bonnet that had betrayed them; the Indians had found it where it had slipped unnoticed to the ground, while she awaited her turn to descend the rope.

Sougo held up his hand as a signal, and the four, with guns primed and ready, stepped out on the shelving rock, firing instantly. Mr. Lee struck Grey Wolf in the leg and he crawled back up the bluff, howling with pain and rage. Jim's man and Sougo's flattened themselves on the ground like a flash, so that the bullets missed; but one warrior, standing on the edge of the bluff, caught Arnold's bullet full in the heart, and without a sound rolled over and over down the bluff, landing squarely on the rock in front of the cave. He was a ghastly sight; his naked body painted blood red, his face disfigured and distorted, the blood spurting from the wound.

"Don't look!" Arnold cried, standing in front of Felice. "Keep your eyes closed a moment." With a shudder, he stepped out on the rock and gave the dead Indian a push; a moment later there was a dull splash in the river below, and Arnold with a low cry of pain fell back in the cave,—an arrow deep in his shoulder.

"You must pull, Sougo. It is barbed and poisoned, too, I think. Jim, you had better help."

With a mighty effort, the two pulled out the arrow, tearing the flesh and bringing a great spurt of blood. With a cry, Felice was at Philip's side, tearing the white fichu from her gown to bind the wound.

"It is too bad to spoil the pretty thing," the young man objected.

Judy donated her cap and kerchief and strips from a voluminous petticoat, to aid in stanching the flow of blood.

Captain Arnold's paleness was due to another cause than his wound. He realized that they were in a dangerous position. The warriors could hide behind trees, watch the rock, and shoot any one who appeared there, keeping them prisoners indefinitely; and meantime more warriors might arrive at any moment. The horses should have reached the fort by this time, and alarmed the soldiers; but suppose they had strayed off into the woods, eating grass; or suppose the Indians had captured and tied them!

Sougo was watching through his peep-hole.

"More warriors!" he whispered, holding up all his fingers.

Captain Arnold turned a shade paler; they were in a desperate place; caught like rats in a hole; his right arm was useless, Mr. Lee was but an indifferent shot, and Jim and Sougo could not manage a dozen warriors.

"They comin' down," whispered the boy.

Arnold handed his hunting knife to Felice, and his gun to Sehoy, keeping his pistol in his left hand.

"Take the gun and shoot straight,—understand!" The child nodded. Drawing the minister aside, the young captain whispered hoarsely, looking toward Felice:

"If the worst comes, sir, in God's name, don't let them take her alive! It were better far that she die."

"I understand," replied Mr. Lee. Putting his arm about the trembling girl, he said:

"It is all right, dear. The Lord will take care of us. And if we must go, we will go together."

Arnold laid his hand for a moment on Felice's arm. "You are very brave," he said gently.

She tried to smile through her tears. "No, I am not brave. I am very, very frightened."

Of a sudden there came shouts from above, and sounds of many shots. The little party in the cave waited breathlessly. At last the sounds of fighting ceased, and a voice, which Arnold recognized as Colonel Caller's, shouted:

"Hello there, below!"

And then the young soldier, overcome by loss of

blood, and the poison from the arrow, lost consciousness.

When he came to himself again he was lying on a couch in Colonel Caller's house at the fort, and Dr. Barrow had just finished dressing his shoulder.

"That Red Stick had some poison on his arrow. Your arm won't be in fighting condition for some weeks."

"But, Doctor, I must fight. The Creeks are on the warpath, and we must fight, and fight hard, every man of us."

Colonel Caller,—a tall, grey-haired, soldierly man,—took the young man's hand in his.

"That's all right, Philip; but you must obey the doctor's orders. I am going to start at once to meet Sam Dale across the Alabama. Mr. Lee delivered Sam's message. We'll stop this war before it gets started. I'll put you in command here, and you rest easy. Give that shoulder a chance to heal. Mr. Gaines is away in the Choctaw country on business; better send word to him at once."

A little later the company was ready to start. Colonel Caller was at its head—a picturesque figure in bright red hunting shirt, top boots, and broad-brimmed hat. Mr. Lee mounted a horse and announced his intention of going along. Colonel Caller remonstrated, but the minister held his ground.

"I have wanted to fight Indians all my life, and now that I have the chance, surely you will not deny me the privilege."

The soldiers shouted their approval; they had

learned to love this simple, kind-hearted man of God during his short stay among them, and were pleased now to find him a good soldier. He in turn had found much to love in these rough soldiers of the frontier; under all their roughness and crudeness they were brave and fearless, and the majority of them had an abiding childlike faith in God. Living in this wilderness of the Southeast, amid constant dangers, they realized that, except for Divine protection, their lives would not be worth a straw.

So with Colonel Caller the minister rode away at the head of the little company. They were singing:

"Over the hills and far away,
We go to fight Red Sticks to-day;
And when they're all slain
We'll come back again
From over the hills and far away."

Felice had been taken in hand by pretty Anne Gaines (whose husband was the Government Indian Agent), and after weeping on Anne's sympathetic shoulder and drinking a cup of Anne's excellent coffee to strengthen her nerves, she had bathed her face, and now felt quite herself again.

With Captain Arnold and all those remaining at the fort she stood on the bluff watching the soldiers march away down to the river, cross it, and turn to wave their hands before disappearing among the trees on the other side. They were still singing; and for a long time their voices floated back.

When the last sound died away, Captain Arnold sighed as he and Felice turned back to the fort.

"You are disappointed not to go? Yet Uncle Maurice says you do not like to fight."

"But my place is at the front with the others. I do not like being left behind when there is fighting to be done. Duty calls me there."

"I am so sorry!" Her eyes smiled softly at him. "But this time your duty calls you here to look after the fort and the colonel's wife and Anne Gaines and —me."

"That," replied Arnold, smiling gravely, "is my compensation."

CHAPTER IV

BURNT CORN CREEK

For the next two weeks Captain Philip Arnold lived in a kind of earthly paradise. He was hopelessly in love, and the few soldiers left at the fort smiled and winked behind his back. He rode and walked with Felice every day, and each day found him more in love than the last. He waited impatiently for Mr. Lee's return, that he might ask permission to speak to her. Sometimes the girl thought him almost sullen, when it was only that he dared not speak lest he tell her of his love.

Felice regarded him only as a very charming companion, with whom she had no idea of falling in love.

St. Stephens was a small settlement, consisting of the strong, well-built block house, the commandant's white plastered residence, a roughly built church, and a number of little houses covered with cypress bark. In one of these Miss Lee lived very contentedly with Anne Gaines; and while she awaited her uncle's return, she spent the time playing with the Gaines' baby, and riding, or walking, with Captain Arnold.

Together they explored the forests about St. Stephens, and the girl learned much of woodcraft, many

of nature's secrets, wonderful things about the flowers and birds and trees.

Two weeks passed, and still no word came from the company of soldiers that had ridden away to fight the Indians. Captain Arnold became uneasy, but he did not tell Felice of his fears.

Late one afternoon, as Felice was sitting on the verandah of the Gaines' cottage taking care of the baby while his mother rode over to a near-by Choctaw village with Mr. Gaines, Judy appeared in the doorway.

"Fur de Lawd's sake, Missy, gib me dat chile! Yo' doan' know no mo' 'bout ten'in' a baby dan a fens' pos'. Dar yo' sits gazin' inter space, an' de chile crawlin' 'roun' eatin' rocks an' dirt. Dar come Marse Capin' loafin' down heah. Go 'long talk ter 'im while's I ten's dis chile. Come heah to Judy, bress lil' honey chile, an' take dat rock out yo' mouf."

"Marse Capin" presented Felice with a bunch of wild honeysuckle he had picked in the woods.

"Would you care to walk down to the river, Miss Lee?" he asked. "I think we will find it much cooler down there."

"I promised Anne to look after the baby," she hesitated.

"Go 'long wid yo'. Ah's ten'in' dis baby."

The two walked together down the path to the river. They stood on the bank in the cool shade, watching the water as it flowed restlessly on, reflecting in its depths the clear blue of the sky, with now

and then a fleecy white cloud, and the soft green of the trees and vines along the banks. Occasionally a fish flashed for a moment in the sun, only to drop back into the water with a splash.

"It is much cooler down here," the girl said at length, plucking leaves from the bunch of wild honeysuckle in her hand. "Tell me, Captain Arnold, do you think anything has happened to Uncle Maurice? Should they not be back by this time?"

"We should have heard something from them," he replied. "But I do not know; they may be too busy fighting to spare a messenger. We must hope for the best."

"I have learned not to worry much about Uncle Maurice; he seems to bear a charmed life,—he has had so many narrow escapes. I think the Lord must have a special guardian angel for him. But I shall be very glad to see him again,—safe."

"And I, too. Not only for the sake of his safety, but because I have something to ask him." He was silent a moment; and then, as if he could restrain his words no longer, he went on:

"Felice, I love you. I have loved you for a long time. I think even before I ever saw you, I loved you, and was waiting for you. I know I should not speak without your uncle's consent——"

"Oh, don't, Captain Arnold!" she interrupted. "Please don't. I am so sorry. I——"

"You do not care for me? Perhaps——"

"I—I am already betrothed."

To the young man the world seemed to end with

those words. He sat dazed, speechless and miserable.

"I beg your pardon. I hope you will forgive me. I did not know," he stammered at length.

"I am the one to be forgiven. I should have told you before."

"It would have made no difference. I could not have helped loving you had I known even before you came."

"Captain Arnold,"—she held out her hands impulsively,—"I am so sorry to make you unhappy; it grieves me more than I can tell you. We have been such good friends. Indeed, I am sorry."

He kissed her hands,—one and then the other,—but released them at once, not daring to trust himself to hold them longer.

The girl was troubled. She liked this young man very much, and it grieved her to give him pain. He was not the first man she had refused; but somehow he was different. In Washington,—where men were plentiful and beautiful girls scarce,—she had received numerous offers, but had taken none of them very seriously; and when she had become betrothed to her young cousin, Mr. Payne Todd, most of the others had sought and found comfort in some plainer, kinder lady. She gazed at Arnold with troubled eyes as he sat watching the river,—the expression on his face that of one who without hope looks out on life.

The sun had gone down, and in the twilight the river, a while before so shining and bright, looked

deep and dark and treacherous. There was no sound but the rippling of the water as it hurried by.

Suddenly the man straightened, every sense alert.

"Listen!" he whispered.

From across the river came a faint cry.

"Sounds like some one calling for help!"

Jumping into a canoe, he shoved off, crossed the river with long, swift strokes of the paddle, uncertain in the gathering dusk whether he would find friend or foe on the other side.

"If they're Red Sticks," he thought grimly, "my scalp will bring five dollars in Pensacola the day after to-morrow. I almost hope they are Indians."

But they were not Indians. On the other bank he found two white men,—starved and almost helpless, —one with a great, ugly wound on his head, and both so weak, ragged, and dirty that Arnold did not at first recognize them.

"Who are you," he asked, "and where do you come from?"

The wounded man lay on the ground in silence; the other spoke.

"Don't you know us, Captain Arnold? I'm Lee, and this is your Colonel."

"How? Why?" A flood of questions came to the young man's tongue; and then he stopped, realizing that the two men were in no condition to talk.

"Your uncle!" he shouted to the girl, who was waiting anxiously on the other side, "and Colonel Caller. Run to the fort for help."

He half dragged the two men to the canoe; they

were past helping themselves any farther. When he reached the landing, a half dozen soldiers were waiting.

"It's the Colonel and the Preacher,—'bout starved, and sick, too," one of them said. "Here, lend a hand! Careful now! Ready! Gently, boys, gently!"

They carried the two men up to the fort to the Colonel's house. Dr. Barrow was waiting for them. He examined the minister first.

"Put him to bed," he ordered. "Give him some warm milk, and let him alone. He needs rest and sleep more than anything else."

But he shook his head gravely over the colonel.

"A bad wound! A mighty bad wound!" he muttered.

The fort waited in a state of excitement for the two men to recover sufficiently to tell their story. The Colonel remained in a state of unconsciousness, but by noon the next day Mr. Lee was awake and feeling so much better, the doctor said he might tell his story briefly. The news spread quickly, and the inhabitants of the little fort crowded on the verandah and about the open windows.

"Make it brief, sir," the doctor ordered. "You can add the embellishments later."

Mr. Lee, haggard and emaciated, resembled little the stout, ruddy gentleman who had ridden away just two weeks before. Propped up with pillows, with Felice beside him holding his hand, he told his story to a most sympathetic audience.

"We met Captain Dale the next morning, across

the Alabama, and started south at once. All along the way men joined us; so by the third day we were a goodly company. Just before noon we reached a little stream; Burnt Corn Creek, I think, they called it."

"Yes, that's it,—Burnt Corn Creek," said one of the soldiers. "The Pensacola road crosses it."

"Colonel Caller sent out scouts, who soon returned to report that the Indians were camped at a spring, less than a mile away, cooking dinner. We took them by surprise, and drove them off without any trouble,—not much fighting. Then the men broke ranks and began eating the dinner the Indians had cooked. The Indians gathered together and came back, taking us by surprise, as we had done them. All was confusion and disorder. Colonel Caller was the first man wounded, so there was nobody to command. Many of the men were undisciplined, and fled, paying no heed to Captain Dale's attempts to rally them. The colonel staggered off into the woods, and I followed, realizing that he was badly wounded. We managed, somehow, to get away from the Indians. I soon discovered that the wound on the colonel's head had affected his mind; he knew nothing of our whereabouts. I was a stranger in a strange land, without horse or food. We wandered on for days (I lost all count of time), working toward the northwest, but failed to find any settlements. At last we reached the Alabama river, where a half-breed Indian boy took pity on us, gave us some parched corn, and carried us across the river

on a raft. I remembered the road there,—we had traveled it from Tookabatcha,—so it was not hard to find the way here—except for our weakness and the colonel's blank mind. Sometimes he would refuse to come any farther, and I had to fairly drag him along, though I had scarcely strength enough to drag myself."

"Three cheers for the preacher!" shouted a soldier. The cheers were given heartily, and Mr. Lee became at once quite a hero at the fort. The soldiers realized what hardships he had endured, a stranger in a wild country, with a helpless man on his hands.

He flushed at the praise showered upon him from all sides, and said protestingly:

"I do not deserve the credit. It was Divine guidance that brought us through. Without that, we would have starved, or been killed."

A week later Colonel Caller was himself again, and had regained his memory. As soon as the doctor would permit, he sent for Captain Arnold.

"Good evening, Philip. How is the shoulder?" was his first question.

"Almost well, except for the stiffness, thank you, sir. I am glad to see you so much better. We have all been very uneasy about you."

"I will be as good as new in a few days." Then he continued: "Philip, I want a messenger to inform General Claiborne of our condition here. He must be made to realize our absolute need of reinforcements. We have not enough men to defend even the

fort, and the settlers across the 'Bigbee are looking to us for protection. He must also receive accurate information of our encounter at Burnt Corn Creek."

"Shall I start at once?" Arnold asked.

"Thank you, Philip. I felt sure you would be willing to go. In the morning will do, as you will have another commission besides the message to General Claiborne. Mr. Lee thinks it best to get his niece to Mobile at once. You will escort them as far as Fort Stoddert. Ask General Claiborne to provide them with safe escort to Mobile, and you return as soon as possible, so that I may know what General Claiborne will do to help us."

After leaving the colonel's house Arnold walked down the street to the Gaines cottage. For the past week he and Felice had avoided each other, and when they met by chance they were both rather embarrassed. Mrs. Gaines was sitting on the little verandah rocking the baby to sleep.

"Can you tell me where I will find Miss Lee?" he asked of her.

"She walked down toward the river a few moments ago. Will you sit down and wait for her?"

"Thank you, I will try to find her."

He found the young girl sitting beside the path, halfway down the bluff. She was wearing a soft white mull dress; her hair was fastened with a black velvet snood; about her throat was a narrow piece of velvet holding a small locket, blue enameled, barred with gold, and set with pearls. She looked like a fine miniature, as she sat there deep in thought.

Philip watched her for some time before she became conscious of his presence. She flushed when at length she turned her head and saw him standing near.

"I am bidding farewell to the river. You know we leave the fort to-morrow. I have learned to love St. Stephens. I shall be sorry to go, but Uncle Maurice thinks it best."

"Yes, I know you are going to-morrow, and I am to be your escort as far as Fort Stoddert. That is why I am here now,—to ask of you a favor. We will reach Fort Stoddert the day after to-morrow, and then you and I will part, probably never to see each other again. I ask you this: To give me to-morrow as my day,—one day of your life that I may cherish and remember always. Is that asking too much from one who loves you better than life? Surely the other man, who is to have all your days, will not begrudge me this one."

She hesitated, flushing again. When she spoke, it was with averted face and a queer little trembling in her voice.

"I will grant your request, on one condition."

"I know," he interrupted; "on condition that I do not make love to you? I promise not even once to speak of my love. We will both try to forget that I love you, and be for one day just good friends. Is that sufficient? Am I to have my day?"

"Yes," she answered, still with averted face. He kissed her hand gently.

"That seals the compact, and it will be a day in paradise for me. Doesn't it seem all wrong that a

man should wait patiently, longing with all his heart and soul for the one woman, and then, when at last he finds her, she loves another?"

The girl pulled nervously at the little gold-barred locket. Suddenly she faced him, and the look in her brown eyes startled him.

"Perhaps——" she began impulsively, then stopped.

"Perhaps what?" he asked eagerly. The long dark lashes veiled her eyes, and she rose slowly.

"Nothing. I must go in to look after my packing. Judy sometimes is very careless about leaving things. We start early?"

"At sunrise. And, remember, it is to be My Day."

"Yes, it is to be your day. And please remember —your promise," she added wistfully.

That night Arnold sat long before his little cabin, smoking his pipe and dreaming of the morrow and the joy that would be his—for one day. In her little whitewashed chamber at the Gaines cottage Felice sent Judy away, blew out the candle, and knelt by the open window, resting her head on her arms, as she gazed out into the silent, moonlit night. The air was warm and laden with the mingled fragrance of rose and honeysuckle.

Suddenly she raised her head,—tears glistening in her lovely eyes,—and whispered softly into the night:

"My Knight of Honor! He is still my Knight of Honor."

CHAPTER V

HIS DAY

Along the shady road to Fort Stoddert, amid the trees and the flowers and the singing birds, Captain Arnold had his day in paradise. If his heart were heavy with the thought that on the morrow life would be bleak and barren for him, he did not show it. Felice,—secure in his promise not to speak of his love,—determined to do all in her power to make the day a happy one for him. Never before had she been more brilliant and witty, nor so winsome. The woods echoed with their mingled laughter; the birds flew chattering along the roadside, amazed to find two human beings who seemed to rival them in the simple joy of living. Mr. Lee rode ahead with Sougo. Finding the boy an interested listener, eager to hear, he told him stories from the Bible, or from his own experiences.

Judy who was "jes' natchl'y 'bliged ter tawk er bus'," unburdened herself to little Sehoy. The fact that the child understood almost nothing of what she said did not bother her in the least.

"Ah tells yo' what, honey chile, Ah shoh does wish my lil' Missy gwine marry Marse Cap'n. Marse Payne Todd, what she say she gwine marry, ain't no man feh heh. He got a fine, spendifrous ma, Mis'

Madison—she jis' as sma't en good ez dey make 'em. Marse Payne pow'ful handsome, but he drink en gam'le too much, en 'caze he Marse Madison's step-son, an' him de Pres'dint, ev'ybody done spile him mos' tuh def. De bes' thing 'bout him is dat he shoh do lub Missy,—he gwine cut off his rite han' ef she done tole him to. But she en him ain't gwine be happy when dey git married, Ah jis' knows."

Mr. Lee was thinking much the same to himself as he rode ahead.

"I wish Felice were not already betrothed. I am afraid she and young Payne will never be happy together, they are so unsuited to each other. This young captain is just the man for her; and how he loves her! Men have loved Felice before, but not as Arnold does; the others loved her youth, her beauty, her ready wit; but this man sees deeper, and loves her not only for those things but for the nobler, better things. Ah, me! Women are strange creatures. If I could only be sure she loves young Payne! She is so young to know her own mind; yet many women at her age are married and mothers. I am sorry for the captain. To lose Felice will go hard with him."

The two young people were singing. The minister paused a moment to listen.

"Her brow is like the snaw-drift;
Her throat is like the swan;
Her face it is the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on—
That e'er the sun shone on—
And dark blue is her ee;
And for Bonnie Annie Laurie
I'd lay me doune and dee."

"Ah, well! I suppose it is useless to spoil this lovely day worrying over a pair of young folks who surely are wasting no time worrying about themselves." So Mr. Lee started his horse, humming the sweet old song and dreaming of an Annie Laurie he had known long ago.

In the midst of the song Captain Arnold stopped singing, and reined in his horse.

"Look!" he whispered, pointing. "Do you see the little brown thrush, there, on the lowest limb?"

"Yes, I see. Isn't he a serious little fellow? He looks as if he carries the weight of the world on his little shoulders."

"Wait until he sings!"

They sat their horses in silence, watching the brown thrush pondering o'er the problems of his little brain. There was a rustle in the tree above, the little fellow raised his head, recognizing the flutter of his mate's wings, then burst into song; sweet, clear, and flutelike,—a song of happiness and love. When the song was ended, and he had flown up to join his mate, the two riders started their horses slowly, still under the spell of the little singer. The girl spoke first.

"Isn't it wonderful? The finest human voice with years of training cannot rival the natural sweetness of one little wood bird. Do you know, that brown thrush reminds me of you? At first you seemed so somber and serious that I thought you must have a heavy burden on your shoulders; and then, all at once——"

"I saw my mate," he interrupted softly. "I beg your pardon; I should not have said that. I *have* a heavy burden on my shoulders, but love lightens even the heaviest of burdens. The song of the thrush always reminds me of this little song, composed by a schoolmate of mine. The words are Robert Burns':

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers flow,
And mony a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair.
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air;
There's not a bonnie flower that springs,
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
But 'minds me o' my Jean."

Philip sang the song through, and Felice, being already familiar with the words, sang it after him.

He thought many things as he watched her,—the scarlet lips and flushed cheeks, the sparkling eyes and the golden-brown curls about her face,—but remembered his promise and spoke no word. Eyes, however, make no promises, and keep none; therefore his grey ones were eloquent with words his lips were forbidden to speak, and for one delicious second he thought the brown eyes almost answered before Felice turned her head abruptly and looked the other way.

"Come," she said, "we have been lagging behind. Something tells me it must be nearly supper time. Shall we race a little? Only we must stop before Uncle Maurice sees us; he thinks riding fast very unladylike, but I love it. Sometimes I wish I were a man—it is tiresome being a lady and doing all the things that are ladylike and leaving undone all the nice things that are not. If you ever come to Washington, I will let you ride Mr. Jefferson; and that is a compliment to your riding. I have never permitted anyone else to ride him."

"And who is Mr. Jefferson?"

"My horse. Mr. Jefferson gave him to me three years ago."

"You know Mr. Jefferson?"

"Very well indeed; and love him next to Uncle Maurice. Everybody loves him; he is so kind and gentle and lovable. Are you ready?"

The two horses pounded down the road at a reckless pace. Felice was a fearless rider, but her horse was not so sure-footed as was Mark. The root of a tree tripped him, and he would have gone down, had not Arnold quickly grasped the bridle.

"Thank you, Captain Arnold! I would have had a bad fall but for you." She paled a little at the thought of what a dangerous fall it might have been.

"Your horse has gone lame,—strained the muscles, I suppose." He swung from his saddle to examine the lame foot. "Do you mind riding with me? I will tie the horse here and send Sougo back for him."

"Thank you! That seems the best thing for me to do. Nothing makes me so unhappy as to ride a lame horse."

He arranged a blanket pillionwise on Mark, lifted Felice lightly to this seat, and remounted.

"We are far behind, the sun is getting low, your uncle will be worried about you." He touched Mark lightly with his heel, and the horse darted forward.

Felice clutched the young man's shoulder; her nearness to him, the touch of her hand, the memory of the look in her eyes when for a second they had almost answered his, made him fairly lose his head. Faster and faster flew Mark at each touch of his master's heel.

"Captain—Arnold—is—it—necessary—to—go—quite—so fast?"

He did not answer, and Mark flew along a trifle faster. The girl clung desperately with both hands to the broad shoulders. Arnold could feel her warm, quick breathing on his neck.

"Please,—please—stop!"

"Felice," he said recklessly, "tell me you love me and I will."

No answer.

"Do you?"

"If—you—are—a—gentleman—you—will—stop—at once."

"Do you love me?" Mark darted on a little faster.

"I do"—Mark almost lost his balance at the sudden jerk that brought him to a walk—"not," she

added, slipping to the ground. Arnold was beside her at once, apologizing and begging forgiveness, but the girl turned disdainfully from his pleading.

"I prefer walking to riding with a man who is not a gentleman."

"Please forgive me!" he begged, very much ashamed of himself. "I did not mean to behave so. I really did not. I quite lost my head."

"Then you had best go back to look for it while I walk on."

"Won't you ride, if I promise——"

"Promises mean nothing to you."

"But I didn't break my promise. I just asked you——"

She turned her back on him, and started down the road.

"You ride alone, then, and I will walk," he pleaded.

No answer. For a couple of miles they trudged along: an offended and disdainful lady, followed by a most humble and crestfallen knight leading his horse.

It was almost dark, and the lady was getting very tired when a turn in the road brought them to the others. Mr. Lee was just on the point of riding back to look for them.

"My horse went lame, and Mark runs away when he carries double. I am so tired!" Felice explained, seating herself wearily on a log.

When supper was over, Mr. Lee and Captain Arnold sat smoking their pipes together. After a long silence the young man spoke hesitatingly.

"Mr. Lee, would you mind telling me about,—about the man your niece is going to—marry? Is he worthy? But that is a foolish question. No man on earth is worthy of her."

Mr. Lee laid his hand affectionately on the young man's arm.

"I am sorry, Captain Arnold; I wish it might be you. I know of no man I would rather choose for her. But girls must choose for themselves. I hope the boy is worthy. I cannot be sure; he is so young. His habits have not been of the best; but of late, since his betrothal to Felice, he has improved. He is much in love, and the girl has a wonderful influence over him. Perhaps you know him,—Payne Todd."

"Mrs. Madison's son? I do not know him, but I have heard of him."

"And not very favorably, I am afraid. The boy is scarcely to blame,—he has been petted and pampered all his life. He and Felice have been brought up together, and since they were mere children it has been his mother's dearest wish that they should marry. I hope it will turn out for the best."

"Surely a man must keep straight, with her to love," Arnold replied.

Knocking the ashes from his pipe, he strolled over to the log where Felice was sitting with Sehoy and Judy.

"The moon is beautiful to-night. It reminds me of the night we camped at Little Blue Creek last month. Do you remember?"

The girl did not answer.

"Ah shoh does 'member, Marse Cap'n," said Judy. "Dem was de hardes' rocks what I set on whiles yo' an' Missy clamb up ter look at de sunset. 'En bime-by de moon com' up, and yo' all still settin'. Ah reckons yo' all ben sittin' yit, ef Ah hadn't er made yo' com' down."

"Won't you sing something, Miss Lee?" asked Philip, trying to find some excuse for lingering. "Won't you sing 'Robin Adair'?"

"I am much too tired to sing to-night. Come, Judy, I think I will retire. Good night, Captain Arnold."

"Good night, Miss Lee. Before you go may I thank you for—my day?"

"Oh, you are quite welcome!" she replied coolly. "Come, Judy!"

Captain Arnold seated himself on the log, and, lighting his pipe, smoked in moody silence. After a space a sweet voice, tender with love and longing, floated out from the little tent, singing softly:

"What's this dull town to me?
Robin's not near,—
He whom I wished to see,
Wished for to hear!
Where's all the joy and mirth
Made life a heaven on earth?
Oh, they're all fled with thee,
Robin Adair!"

For one wild, breathless moment Arnold thought she was singing for him, and then he remembered the other man. He shrank back on the log, his face

white and drawn. For some time he sat thus, in helpless misery; then suddenly he raised his face toward the moonlit sky.

"Father in heaven," he prayed brokenly, forgetting himself and thinking only of the girl, "if she loves him like that, make him worthy,—make a man of him for her sake."

Unable to sleep, Arnold wandered restlessly about, filling his pipe again and again, puffing constantly at it. There were many sounds in the warm night air: the murmuring of a breeze in the pines, the hoot of an owl, the call of a nightbird, and somewhere in the distance a faint persistent noise,—not often heard in the woods. The boy Sougo stood listening, every sense alert, but Arnold, absorbed in his own thoughts, heard nothing. He was beginning to realize, now that separation on the morrow was so near, how very desolate and barren life without Felice would be for him. In the sunshine of her presence, in the joy of being near her, he could forget everything else and be happy. But when she was gone—— Several times for a fleeting second he had fancied he saw something in her eyes that gave him hope, but the day had quite dispelled any illusions he had in that direction.

"Ah, well!" he thought; "perhaps it is best. Duty must always come first with me; and it would be hard not to put Felice first always, when I love her so much."

He lived over again the day just passed,—his day,—the sound of her voice, her lovely face, the touch

of her hand, the joy of riding with her at his side, as they talked and sang and laughed together. He thrilled again at the memory of her swaying against him, and the touch of her arms grasping him so desperately as Mark pounded madly along the road. She was angry with him of course; but it was worth even her anger. In the lonely days that lay before he would feel again her nearness to him as he had to-day.

In the midst of his absorbing thoughts he caught sight of Sougo, his lithe young body tense, his head held forward in alert attention.

"What is it, Sougo?" he asked.

"Listen!" whispered the boy.

Arnold listened for a second, and was alarmed by the faint, distant, persistent noise. Making a quick gesture in the direction of the noise, the boy crept away, as strong and silent as a young panther.

A mile to the south he found hundreds of Creek warriors gathered about a huge fire, singing their weird songs and dancing fantastic dances. With their bodies painted blood-red, gleaming in the firelight, and their faces hideously colored, they well merited the name "Red Devils," which the white settlers had given them. Sougo crept close to the circle around the fire. Not a twig snapped, not a leaf rustled under his soft tread. Crouching behind a tree, he waited, listening. A dozen warriors were dancing in single file around the fire,—going through marvelous contortions and gyrations as they swung and swayed, while the other warriors, stand-

ing or sitting about, chanted in unearthly fashion.

Beside a tree quite near to Sougo stood a tall chief, smoking his pipe in moody silence, and glancing occasionally at the dancers, disapproval in his dark eyes. He was Lamochattee, the Red Eagle. Unlike his warriors, his face and body were not painted, but shone like tanned leather in the firelight. His face was strong and intelligent. Physically he was a typical Creek, and had all the fearlessness and cunning of his race; but from a white father he had inherited a keen mind, unusual intelligence, and a sympathy for the white people. He did not have the savage thirst for blood, so characteristic of his people. Despite these differences, he remained a staunch Creek, and as Sam Dale said, "was mighty loyal for a half-breed." On his head was the headdress,—an eagle with blood-red feathers,—that distinguished him as the Red Eagle wherever he went.

Sougo, listening behind the tree, waited for some word that might disclose the purpose of this gathering. At length he heard what he was waiting for, and retreated as silently as he had come, leaving the warriors still dancing and singing.

Arnold waited impatiently until Sougo was back at his side. The boy spoke softly, briefly, and the young man understood:

"Many warriors! Red Eagle! Fort Mimms! Tomorrow!"

Arnold stepped over to Mr. Lee, who was sleeping on the ground, and touched him gently on the arm. He was awake and alert at once.

"What is it, Captain?"

"A party of Creek warriors is camped below here. We are in grave danger, and must leave at once. They are planning to attack Fort Mimms to-morrow. We must get there as quickly as possible, to warn the fort. I think we can make it by daylight. It is a strong fort, and well garrisoned, and if warned and ready can withstand any number of Indians. Will you waken Miss Lee and Judy? Caution them to be absolutely quiet. The Creeks can hear a long distance, and we are lost if they get the least suspicion of our presence here."

The little party, making their way carefully, walked in silence for some time toward the southeast, leading the horses; until Arnold thought it would be safe to ride. They then mounted, and with Sougo picking the way, rode as rapidly as the uncertain path would permit. At length they reached the river just above the cut-off. Sougo found an old boat tied to the bank, under a willow tree; and crossing the Tombigbee, they rowed slowly down the Nannahubba, a small river in the fork of the 'Bigbee and the Alabama,—swimming the horses beside the boat, which was leaking badly, and which, even with constant bailing, filled with water so rapidly that they were forced to land on the island formed by the three rivers.

It was very dark when they landed at a place unfamiliar to both Arnold and Sougo. The ground was marshy and covered with a thick tangle of undergrowth. The horses walked with difficulty;

often they stumbled and went down on their knees, or stepped knee-deep in a marshy hole. Suddenly Arnold and his companions found themselves in a canebrake,—the grass ten feet high and almost impenetrable. They halted while Sougo crept about until he found a path that had been cut through. This path led them straight to Mimms' Ferry and the broad Alabama. Here they found a canoe, and floated down the river, across Lake Tensaw, smooth and motionless as glass in the early morning light. From the boat landing at the head of the lake it was but a short distance through the woods to the picketing of Fort Mimms.

The peace and quiet surrounding the fort satisfied Arnold that he was not too late; the Indians had not yet arrived. Coming nearer, his eyes widened in astonishment; the gate was wide open, no sentry was on guard. Inside all was quiet; not a person was in sight. In the center was a large, low, rambling house, with broad verandah all around; scattered here and there about the enclosure were numerous outbuildings, cabins, and tents; strong stockading enclosed the whole, and there were two ponderous gates,—one on the east, one on the west,—both thrown wide open. Arnold frowned.

"I cannot understand such carelessness. Were we a party of Indians, we might easily scalp the entire fort in their beds."

Just then from the wide-open door of the large house an Indian girl appeared and walked toward them, watching them with shy, curious eyes. She

was taller than the usual Creek woman, and strikingly beautiful, with the dark hair and eyes of her Indian mother, and the fair face and regular features of her white father.

She wore an Indian dress of bright blue buckskin, heavily beaded and fringed; dark braids were wound about her head and fastened with a broad silver band, on her arms were many bracelets of silver and gold and colored beads. She was Chiaha, betrothed of Lamochattee,—the Red Eagle.

CHAPTER VI

FORT MIMMS

Captain Arnold spoke to the Indian girl in Creek, inquiring for Major Beasley, the commander at Fort Mimms. She answered him in very good English.

"You will find him there." She pointed to the large house. "But you cannot see him yet. He does not rise until seven."

"But I must see him; it is most important."

Several soldiers now were astir, and one of them came toward the strangers.

"There is Captain Bailey. You might speak to him about your business," the girl replied. Smiling shyly at Felice, she said, "Come with me."

Taking her by the hand, she led her away to the house, followed by Sehoy and Judy.

"You are Captain Bailey?" asked Arnold of the soldier. And continued: "We are from St. Stephens, on our way to Fort Stoddert."

"Isn't this a rather roundabout way to reach Fort Stoddert?" replied Bailey.

"Yes; unfortunately we were forced to come this way." And Philip told of their experiences of the night. When he had finished, Captain Bailey spoke gravely.

"I will see Major Beasley at once; we have had so many false alarms lately that he refuses now to take any warning seriously. You have had a hard night; come in to breakfast and rest."

He led them across the verandah, through the wide hall, to a room, where about a long table was gathered a curious collection of people,—soldiers, owners of nearby plantations who had brought their families to the fort for protection (some French, some English, some Spanish) and a number of half-breed Indians,—young, middle-aged, and old. Presiding over all was Mother Mimms,—a large woman wearing a blue homespun dress, white apron, and bright red neckerchief,—who bustled about the room, greeting every one cheerfully, looking after their wants, and ordering the servants about.

"Here you, Sukey, bring the hot bread! Good-morning, Captain Bailey! Good-morning, gentlemen! You are very welcome; set down to the table. Here, Jim, take the gentlemen's hats."

The table was loaded with great pewter platters of meat, Indian corn, and potatoes; plates of rye bread, and corn pone; wooden trenchers of ale, and pots of steaming coffee. The men about the table greeted the newcomers cordially, and asked for the news.

"Mother Mimms, will you kindly look after these gentlemen," Captain Bailey said, "while I see Major Beasley?"

"You are a brave man to beard the lion in his den at this hour of the morning," whispered Mother

Mimms. "He was up late last night and drinking hard."

"I can't help it; this is one morning he is going to wake up earlier than usual, whether he likes it or not," Captain Bailey replied.

A little later he returned, followed by the Major in a very bad humor.

"Where is the man," he demanded, "who thinks the Red Devils are comin' after us this morning?"

Arnold rose and answered quietly:

"A party of a hundred or more are gathered somewhere below Wakefield, on the Tombigbee."

"Did you see them?"

"No, but I heard them, and sent my boy to investigate. He saw them and heard their intention of attacking Fort Mimms to-day."

The Major growled angrily as he sat down at the table.

"Then all the proof you have is the word of a half-breed boy?" he scoffed.

"Which is quite sufficient, I assure you," Arnold answered coolly.

"Not for me. We've had false alarms like that for a month: some nigger, or half-breed, rushin' in here every day with a wild tale, and no signs of Indians yet. Why should they gather over there, with two rivers to cross?"

"I do not know."

"All nonsense! Let 'em come. We'll be ready for 'em when they get here." And Major Beasley turned his attention to his breakfast.

Arnold watched him for a few minutes before speaking again.

"But, Major Beasley, merely as a precaution, would it not be well to have the gates closed?" He could not understand the man's indifference.

"Captain Arnold, I am in command here, and when I wish anything done, I will issue my orders without any help from you." He rose from the table and strode angrily away.

The men at the table listened with interest; their sympathies were plainly with Captain Arnold. Their commander was not popular at the fort; but if they disliked him, they also feared him; so they merely looked their approval at Captain Arnold and said nothing. He took Mr. Lee outside when they had finished breakfast.

"Mr. Lee, I cannot comprehend Major Beasley's indifference; he refuses to take even the most ordinary precautions to protect the more than five hundred lives in the fort. It is not safe to remain here, still less is it safe to leave. Major Beasley's conduct is nothing short of criminal. I shall report him to General Claiborne when we reach Fort Stoddert. Suppose you watch at the west gate, and I will take the east, and send Sougo out to reconnoiter. For the sake of Miss Lee and the other women and children we must do what we can. And, Mr. Lee, while you are watching, you might scrape the sand away from the gate. I notice it has drifted so that the gate cannot close."

So Mr. Lee stood guard at the west gate and

Captain Arnold at the east, while Sougo went forth into the woods to look about.

Major Beasley and three of his soldiers were occupied with a card game, and a supply of wine; in front of the large house, the young folks were dancing and singing, while an old negro played the fiddle. Miss Lee was being well cared for by Chiaha and Mother Mimms. After a good breakfast and an hour's rest, she was much refreshed. She and Chiaha had already become fast friends and had even gone so far as to exchange clothes; Felice being curious to see how she would look in the beaded and fringed buckskin dress, and Chiaha being equally curious to see herself in the pretty cambric dress and rose-trimmed hat.

Having completed their toilet, Felice was a pretty sight in the blue beaded dress, with moccasins on her feet, her hair braided and fastened about her head with the broad silver band, above which one lone red feather rose jauntily in the air. And Chiaha was a lovely picture in the cambric dress, and soft white fichu, and the drooping flower-trimmed hat.

"Well now, you do look nice," said Mother Mimms, —"both of you. Your father ought to see you now, Chiaha; he would surely be proud. You are white as anybody. And the other,—you would never be taken for a Creek. Your hair is too curly, and your face too fair. But the clothes are very becoming."

Just before noon a negro boy rushed through the east gate, past Arnold, shouting in terror: "Injuns! Injuns! Woods full of 'em!"

Major Beasley turned from his card game.

"Tie that nigger up and flog him," he ordered. "He's the third to come rushin' in here this mornin' with false alarms."

Before the order could be obeyed, Sougo sprang through the gate.

"Warriors!" he cried, "hundreds in the woods! Red Eagle take me, let me go. Say, 'Go to fort; tell 'em we come!' "

The Major laughed scornfully.

"A very likely story! Tie him up. A half-breed is even worse than a nigger. Give him a good flogging too."

"You will do nothing of the kind," Arnold interposed, white with anger. "The boy is speaking the truth. You had best look to your gates and defenses."

"I am in command here and take orders from no one. And when I give orders they must be obeyed. Tie the boy up."

Before Arnold could reply, the dinner bell sounded, and as if by magic, hundreds of warriors sprang from the woods and swarmed towards the gates. A cry of terror went up from the fort.

"The gates! The gates!"

Captain Arnold and Major Beasley sprang forward, but too late. The warriors had already reached the opening; the first one that darted through struck the Major, with deadly aim. He was killed instantly, being the first of the hundreds who paid the penalty of his carelessness. The

second warrior was Grey Wolf, who struck Arnold on the head; and the Captain fell half behind the huge gates, where he lay unconscious and unnoticed. The third Indian was the chief, Red Eagle. He paused in bewilderment, then spoke to the warrior beside him.

"Gates all open! I do not understand. They could have withstood the attack. I can do nothing now. The warriors will kill and scalp. But I will do what I can to stop them. Oche-Ocha, do you see the little girl yonder in the blue buckskin dress? She is my Chiaha. Her father sent her here for safety. You must save her for me. Carry her to the White Springs, I will come as soon as I can."

Striding into the midst of the howling savages, he tried to stop the dreadful killing and scalping. But the Creeks had been peaceful for too long; they had not tasted blood for some time; now their savage nature was aroused, and no power could stay them in their terrible passion for slaughter and scalps. They threatened to kill Red Eagle if he interfered, and the Chief knew that he was helpless to stop them; though the white blood in his veins made him shudder and turn away from the revolting sight. He watched Oche-Ocha capture the Indian girl, and slip away with her; he could not see her face, but he knew it was Chiaha by the blue buckskin dress; he had given it to her, and there was not another like it anywhere.

But faithful Judy knew who was wearing the blue buckskin dress, and when the warrior started off,

with Felice screaming in his arms, Judy was at his heels. Picking up a board from the ground, she beat his back and legs; but he paid no heed to her, striding on with the girl.

"Yo' gib me mah lil' missy, yo' long-leg red debbil yo'! Doan yo' min', honey chile; Judy gwine git yo'!"

Just then she stumbled over a warrior bending over his victim in the act of removing his scalp, and she paused long enough to administer to that naked Indian what she called a "pow'ful good sound spankin'." The warrior, unused to that mode of warfare, fled howling.

Out through the gate sped Oche-Ocha, with Felice in his arms, and Judy panting after him. On and on through the woods they went until faithful Judy was ready to drop from exhaustion. When it seemed to her she could not go another step, the warrior halted in a quiet, cool, shady place, beside two springs bubbling from the side of a little hill.

He laid the girl on the ground, and going a little distance off, leaned against a tree, paying no further attention to her. She lay there for some time on the soft pine needles, too frightened and exhausted to move. Judy knelt beside her, panting and, for once, quite speechless.

When the white blood in him could no longer bear the awful sights and sounds at the fort Red Eagle turned away, going toward the gate. Suddenly he heard his name called:

"Lamochattee! Lamochattee!"

And a little figure in a cambric dress and a rose-trimmed hat flew toward him. It was the voice of Chiaha, but—a warrior struck her down just before she reached him, and she lay a limp heap at his feet. He lifted the hat from her face. It was Chiaha. Waiting only long enough to kill the warrior who had struck her, Red Eagle lifted the girl in his arms and ran swiftly through the gate into the woods, leaving far behind him the sights and sounds at the fort,—the screams of terror-stricken women, the shouts of soldiers, the crying of children, the fiendish yelling of the Indians.

Captain Bailey had taken command of the fort, and he did the best he could; but it was a hopeless task. Mr. Lee fought bravely with the other men, until the word went around: "It is hopeless. Every man for himself. Escape if you can. Help the women and children."

Behind one of the cabins, Mr. Lee found Mother Mimms with several other women and children, working desperately with an axe in an effort to remove some of the picketing and escape. He took the axe and soon had an opening.

"Have you seen my niece?" he anxiously asked Mother Mimms.

"A warrior carried her off right at the first,—out the gate. The negro woman followed them."

"Ah!" he groaned. "I wish to heaven he had killed her first. Come, we have no time to lose."

They slipped through the picketing unnoticed, and fled to the woods, hiding in a deep ravine.

Felice, lying motionless on the ground, heard a voice at the spring and turned her head to look. Oche-Ocha had disappeared, and another warrior was kneeling beside a limp, crumpled figure in a cambric dress and white fichu, bathing her face with water from the spring. They were Red Eagle and Chiaha. Felice sat up, watching them for a moment, then she rose unsteadily to her feet.

"Come, Judy," she said, "Chiaha needs us."

The Chief thanked her with dumb misery in his dark eyes, and going a little way off, stood beside a tree, never taking his eyes from Chiaha's white face. Felice and Judy worked for an hour over the girl, and at last her eyelids fluttered and she sighed heavily, calling for water. Soon she became very restless and feverish. All the afternoon Judy brought water from the spring, and Felice bathed the hot face and hands and poured cool, refreshing drops between the parched, burning lips. Judy objected to so much water, believing in the prevailing theory that fever patients should be denied water. But Felice had a theory of her own.

"If you wanted to put out any other kind of fire, you would use water. Why not fire in the body? Bring me some more water!"

About sundown the girl became more quiet and slept. The Indian statue beside the tree came to life, stepped noiselessly to Felice and spoke.

"I go now. I return soon. I thank you."

Felice watched him glide away into the forest,

wondering if,—with that look of dumb misery in his eyes, and his Indian maid hovering between life and death,—he had gone to lead in more terrible massacres.

CHAPTER VII

KNIGHT OF HONOR

Sougo was at Arnold's heels when he had rushed to close the gate. When Grey Wolf struck the Captain down, the boy dragged his body behind the gate and stood guard. Already he had one score to settle with Grey Wolf; now he had two. He watched the tall warrior as he went here and there among the other warriors, using his tomahawk with deadly aim, and his scalping knife with revolting rapidity. The boy saw him grasp little Sehoy roughly by the arm, ask her something, and then, angered by her reply, strike her down, and go on in search of another victim. Sougo darted forth, caught the body of his little sister in his arms, and bore her to his hiding place behind the gate, laying her gently beside Captain Arnold.

Then he loaded his gun and waited for a chance at Grey Wolf. Several times he fired, but always it was some other warrior that caught the bullet intended for his Indian step-father. The boy, however, waited patiently, vowing in his young heart that he would kill Grey Wolf sooner or later; if not to-day, then some other day.

In two or three hours the Indians had killed every

inmate of the fort, except the few who had escaped through the broken picketing. Then they retired to a nearby plantation, to eat, drink, and rest. Later they would return to celebrate their victory with a bonfire, burning the whole wretched fort.

As soon as the last warrior had disappeared, Sougo slipped cautiously from behind the gate, with little Sehoy in his arms. He carried her into the woods, and laid her on the ground. A second trip, and Arnold lay beside her. A third trip, and the boy brought a spade and some blankets. He laid his hand above Sehoy's heart. It was quite still; she was dead.

An examination of Arnold brought better results. The Captain's heart was still beating, and he was breathing faintly. The boy worked eagerly, rubbing Philip's hands and feet, bringing water from the lake to bathe his face, even making another dangerous trip to the fort for wine to revive him. After a time his efforts were rewarded: the young captain stirred, opened his eyes, and stared blankly at the trees overhead. The boy then left him, and began digging in the ground with the spade. Arnold turned his head to watch him.

"Sougo," he asked, "what are you doing?"

The boy did not answer, but pointed silently to the little figure on the ground. At sight of the child's body, blood-stained and lifeless, the young man staggered to his feet, remembering in a flash the cry of "Indians!" the open gate, the swarming redskins, then darkness.

"Tell me, Sougo,—quickly! What happened?"

The boy answered briefly:

"Most all dead. Me think Mr. Lee no dead."

"Miss Lee?"

"She no dead, me think."

"Where is she?"

"Oche-Ocha carry her off. That way." He pointed toward the south.

Arnold groaned in despair.

"Come, Sougo, we must find her."

Sougo finished his digging, and with Arnold's help, wrapped the little body in the blankets, and laid the little girl gently in the rough grave. Throwing in the dirt, he covered the spot thickly with pine needles and leaves to hide it, then with his knife he made several odd marks on the nearest tree.

"Some day," he said slowly, "me nail Grey Wolf's scalp to this tree."

The two started toward the south. For some time they walked on in silence, Sougo leading, Arnold at his heels, praying silently, but almost without hope, for Felice Lee's safety.

Suddenly Sougo, with a low cry, darted forward and knelt beside a man lying on the ground. It was Mr. Lee. His face lighted with joy when he saw Sougo and Captain Arnold.

"I came this way to look for my niece," he explained. "I escaped with several others. They have gone on to a place of safety; but I could not leave, uncertain of her fate. I had a fall back there and sprained my ankle,—the right one."

Arnold knelt beside him, straightened the sprained ankle, and bound it tightly.

Just as he finished, a low exclamation from Sougo made him raise his head, and there a few feet away stood Red Eagle, motionless, with folded arms.

Arnold drew his sword and sprang toward the chief, but the Indian did not move.

"Wait!" he said slowly in the Creek language, "I come in peace,—to bring you to the white lady."

"You lie! You only want to lead us into a trap."

"I have you in one now," said Red Eagle. "You are weak, and even with the boy's help, you are no match for me. But I give you my word of honor I mean you no harm."

As he spoke he handed his gun to Arnold, stuck his hunting knife into a tree, and stood before them unarmed. Stooping, he lifted Mr. Lee in his arms.

"Come," he said, "you have the gun. If at any moment you doubt my good faith,—shoot."

For some time he walked on, carrying the minister like a child in his strong arms. Arnold and Sougo followed silently,—the young man hoping desperately that Red Eagle was speaking the truth, that Felice was alive and unharmed.

When at length they reached the springs and he saw Felice sitting on the ground beside the sick girl, Arnold ran to her, calling her name joyfully. She raised her head in bewilderment; she had seen him fall, and could not believe that he was alive. She thought she must be dreaming. At the touch

of his hand on her shoulder, with a cry of joy she sprang to her feet and into his arms, sobbing like a child.

After a moment she drew away, and went to her uncle, who lay on the ground, where the chief had laid him. He put his arms about her, tears of joy and gratitude in his eyes.

"God has been good to us, my dear, when the others——" He shuddered and did not finish. "I am glad you were carried off and did not see all the dreadful things that happened."

"But I saw some of them,—things I can never forget. Oh, it was terrible!" And Felice covered her face and sobbed again.

"There, there, child; try not to think about it."

Red Eagle disappeared, but soon returned, his arms laden with food and blankets. He laid these on the ground beside Judy, motioning her to prepare supper. He made a small fire, and Judy cooked some meat and coffee. When the supper was ready all gathered about to eat; but the chief returned to his post beside the tree, and refused to partake of anything, keeping his eyes on Chiaha's flushed face and feverish, restless body.

Arnold and Felice sat side by side.

"I can scarcely believe you are really here," said she. "I saw the warrior strike you, and I supposed he had killed you. I did not even dare think about it, or I should have gone mad."

"You are a beautiful little squaw," he replied.

"But not a brave one. I was terribly frightened.

These are Chiaha's clothes. If we had not changed, she would probably be here safe and well, and I should be lying back there with the others."

"Don't, dear. I can't bear even to think of it! Poor girl; she seems very sick."

"She has very high fever. I am afraid she is going to die. Red Eagle thinks so too, and he is miserable."

"I can almost forgive him for everything else, because you are safe and he brought me to you."

"He has tried to be kind. He is grateful because I have taken care of Chiaha. He watches her with such dumb misery in his eyes that I am almost sorry for him. Perhaps this is his punishment for to-day's work."

When they had finished eating, Felice returned to her place beside the sick girl, and Arnold sat beside her.

Mr. Lee, resting fairly well, though his ankle still throbbed uncomfortably, lay for some time watching the Indian chief as he stood motionless at his self-appointed post. This man of God had the true missionary spirit, and never missed a chance to speak a word for his Saviour. Calling the warrior, he motioned him to sit down.

Red Eagle obeyed, squatting on his heels beside the minister, and waiting respectfully, his eyes still on Chiaha.

"Tell me, why did you lead your warriors against Fort Mimms to-day to kill and scalp the white people there?"

The chief did not answer at once, but sat looking thoughtfully at the sick girl. At length he said:

"The Creeks are my people. They are at war. I must be faithful to them. I led my warriors to the fort. I am not to blame for the results. Your chief there was to blame. The fort is strong. With gates shut, we could not have entered. This morning we captured a negro boy and that boy there," he pointed to Sougo. "I let them go to warn the fort. Still the gates were open. Am I to blame?" His eyes were still on Chiaha, who moaned restlessly as Felice bathed her hot face and hands and gave her water to drink. "My Chiaha was there, sent by her white father for safety. Do you think I would risk her life? But I did not know. I do not like war. I like peace. My people are at war. We fight for our homes, our lives. Soon the white men will drive us out, but we will die fighting. I am not to blame for to-day."

Mr. Lee realized that the Indian was speaking the truth.

"No," he said, "I don't believe you are." Then he began to speak simply of the Father in Heaven and of Jesus, who lived among men, preaching the gospel and healing the sick.

The Indian listened for a while in silence, then he interrupted:

"What has that to do with me? He is the white man's God."

"Your father was a white man."

The chief raised his head proudly.

"Yes; but I am a Creek," he protested.

"The white man's God will be the Creek's God, if he will let him."

Red Eagle looked at Mr. Lee uncertainly, as if to speak, but was silent.

The minister continued telling him of Christ's mission on earth, of His infinite love and mercy, of His miracles. When he told of the healing of the daughter of Jairus the chief listened with interest.

"Can he heal my Chiaha?"

"If we ask Him in faith, and it is His will."

The Indian hesitated for a second, then said:

"Let us ask Him in faith."

Four times during the night, while Felice and Captain Arnold watched beside the sick girl, and Judy and Sougo carried water from the spring to cool the fever, Mr. Lee felt a touch on his arm, and the Indian chief, kneeling beside the minister, repeated:

"Let us ask Him in faith."

Just before dawn it seemed that the girl was dying,—her heart beat wildly, and her breathing was labored; then she seemed to stop breathing entirely. But as the grey light of morning streaked the darkness in the east, she showed signs of improvement. Her breathing became more regular, her pulse steady, the fever left her, and she slept quietly.

Once more the chief knelt beside Mr. Lee. "Now," he said gravely, his black eyes shining with gratitude and happiness, "let us thank Him in faith."

Captain Arnold thought best to continue at once on their way to Fort Stoddert. The difficulty was with Mr. Lee; he could not ride, even if Arnold could procure horses from some nearby plantation. Red Eagle solved the problem when he disappeared for an hour and returned leading two horses, one of which was Captain Arnold's Mark, captured by the Indians. The chief was followed by an Indian boy leading a third horse drawing a rude cart. Red Eagle made a seat of the blankets, and with Sougo to drive, Mr. Lee found this a very comfortable conveyance.

"If you wait a day, I get one more horse," the chief said.

"Thank you," Arnold replied; "we can manage nicely with these. Judy can ride the pony, and Mark carries double very well." He looked at Felice questioningly, and she blushed as she nodded her head.

Just when they were ready to start, the chief spoke to Mr. Lee in a low voice, and the minister answered. Red Eagle lifted Chiaha in his arms, carried her to the spot where Mr. Lee was already seated in the cart, and stood supporting the girl at his side with his strong arm.

"Dearly beloved,"—the minister's voice rang clear and sweet through the silence of the woods,—"we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the presence of this company, to join together this man and this woman."

And so Lamochattee, the Red Eagle, and Chiaha,

forsaking the faith of their people, were married according to the laws of the white man's God.

"I thank you," said Red Eagle when Mr. Lee had finished. "I no forget what you tell me. When this war is over I fight no more. I tell my people of your Father in Heaven."

Felice kissed Chiaha affectionately, and was lifted by Arnold to a seat on Mark's back. Then he mounted, and the little procession started, waving their hands in farewell to the tall chief and his pale little bride, who looked like some frail, delicate flower beside a strong, protecting tree.

"That Indian is more white than red," remarked Mr. Lee. "He has a good heart. Perhaps into it we have put the little leaven that will leaven the whole loaf. Perhaps through him we will in turn reach his people."

"Provided there are any of his people to reach when we get through this war," added Arnold.

Mark walked along, bearing his double burden with much dignity. His two riders were silent for a time, both too happy for speech.

The young man was first to speak.

"Felice," he asked softly, "you do love me?"

"Yes, Philip." The answer was low, but unhesitating. He turned his head to kiss the hand that rested on his shoulder.

Again they rode for some time in silence.

"If we dispatch a letter to Washington to-night," said Arnold, "we should get a reply, say in four weeks." He sighed. "That is a long time to wait."

"To wait for what?"

"For a reply from the other man, releasing you."

"But that is not necessary. I shall simply write Payne we are no longer betrothed."

"Not necessary for you perhaps, but very necessary for me. It would not be honorable for me to take you from him without his consent. Surely, if he is a gentleman, he will think first of your happiness, and release you when he learns that you desire your freedom."

"I do not know. I think likely he will consider himself first. But that does not matter. I shall marry the man I love."

"But we must ask him."

"And if he refuses?"

"Surely he will not refuse, and meantime we can be very happy. You do not know, dear, what a paradise your love brings to me."

"The same," she answered softly, "that yours brings to me."

"Four weeks!" he sighed. "That is a long time to wait for my first kiss."

"Why wait?" she asked demurely.

"I have not yet the right," he replied.

Felice could not understand his point of view. To her it was a simple matter, and she saw no reason to consider the other man at all. But Arnold had a high sense of honor,—higher than that of the average man,—developed by his fear of ever doing anything to lead him in the path his father had trod.

"I can't understand your point of view," she said; "but you are my Knight of Honor, and I love you."

He longed to take her in his arms and kiss the scarlet lips that had spoken those sweet words,—the sweetest he had ever heard; but he would try to be patient.

When they arrived at Fort Stoddert, news of the Fort Mimms disaster had already reached there. The survivors were welcomed warmly, and their stories listened to with great interest.

Captain Arnold went at once to General Claiborne and spent an hour closeted with him, telling him of the battle at Burnt Corn Creek, of the absolute need of reinforcements at St. Stephens, and of the terrible massacre at Fort Mimms.

"Can you start at once for St. Stephens?" General Claiborne asked when Philip had finished.

"At once, sir, if you wish."

"It is important that you do so. This morning the Choctaw Chief Pushmataha passed through here from Mobile, where he had been to offer his assistance in this war against the Creeks. You know, of course, there is enmity of long standing between the Creeks and the Choctaws. For some unaccountable reason, General Flournoy refused the chief's offer, offending him greatly. Just now a messenger arrived with word from General Flournoy to overtake Pushmataha and accept his offer. God knows we need all the help we can get. I want you to overtake the Choctaw chief, pacify him, and accept his

offer of assistance. Tell Colonel Caller I will send him as many men as I can spare in a few days."

"Thank you, General. I will start at once. I have with me a gentleman and a lady,—Mr. Lee, a minister, and his niece,—on their way to Mobile. He is the gentleman who so bravely assisted Colonel Caller after the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek. He has a badly sprained ankle. If you could accommodate them here until he is able to travel, and then give them safe escort, I will be very grateful, and so will Colonel Caller."

"Very well, I will look after their comfort and see that they reach Mobile safely. Good-bye, Captain."

"Good-bye, General."

Outside, the young man spoke for a few minutes alone with Mr. Lee.

"Mr. Lee, I want to ask you a question that is troubling me. You know I have loved your niece for some time, and last night I discovered by accident that she returns my love. We have already dispatched a messenger to Washington with a letter for the other man, asking him to release her. I pray God he will do so. But, if he refuses, what shall I do? That is my question."

The minister hesitated before replying. He was sorely tempted to give the young man advice that he knew would mean happiness for Felice, but he put the temptation resolutely from him and answered:

"Captain Arnold, I like you better than any man I have ever known. I could not find anywhere a

man I would rather see Felice marry. I believe you love her sincerely, and I believe she loves you. My greatest desire is for the girl's happiness; so had you come to me as her uncle, I would say marry her regardless of everything, if you love each other. But you come to me as a minister of God, asking advice; and as such I can only reply, 'Follow your own conscience.' It is a question of honor, which you must decide according to your own standard. The consciences of some men would not trouble them in deciding such a matter; I do not know about yours. I cannot decide for you; Felice cannot; you must decide for yourself. Were I to tell you it was all right, and were Felice and the whole world to say the same, if in your heart you thought it wrong, then it would be wrong for you."

"Then you think that it would be dishonorable?"

"I did not say so. What do you think, according to your standard of honor?"

"I think it would be wrong."

"Then don't do it. Never violate your conscience, even in small things, and it will prove faithful in keeping you up to your standard of honor."

"Thank you, sir. You have helped me. Of course I have no doubt as to what the other man's reply will be. In a month I will be in Mobile to ask you for your niece's hand. Good-bye, sir, until then."

"Good-bye, Captain Arnold, and I will be a happy old man when I can place that hand in yours. You once said no man could be worthy of Felice. Per-

haps that is true; but I believe you are more nearly worthy than any other man."

"Thank you, sir. I shall try very hard to be at least almost worthy of her."

He asked Felice to walk with him, and leading Mark, they started down the road, talking over their love and the happy days when he would come to Mobile to claim her for his wife.

"You must go back now. Even with Judy to protect you, it is not safe to go far from the fort."

He took her hands in his, kissing them again and again. "Good-bye, dear, for a month,—or always."

"No,—no; Philip! Do not say 'always,' no matter what happens. I should die if I thought I would never see you again. You will come soon?"

"In exactly four weeks; and I will write you whenever there is any chance to send a message."

He took from his coat a small Indian bracelet of quaintly carved silver and fastened it on her arm. "That is the Creek word for love," he explained. "If you ever want me, send me this, and I will come."

"Thank you, Philip. I will send a messenger with it to overtake you five minutes after you are gone."

"You do love me, Felice! Very much?"

"Yes," she replied simply; "very much."

Again he longed to take her in his arms and kiss her sweet lips.

"Good-bye, my Queen of the Golden Hair, I must go now." He kissed her hands passionately.

"Good-bye, my Knight of Honor; and come back to me soon,—to be my King."

CHAPTER VIII

THE NOTCHES OF THE CYPRESS TREE

In a few hours, having put Mark to his best pace, Arnold overtook the Choctaw chief, flattered and pacified him, and, in the name of General Flournoy, accepted his offer of assistance in the war against the Creeks. Pushmataha accepted the flattery and apologies, and agreed to gather his warriors and bring them to St. Stephens. He was a pompous chief, much impressed with his own importance; for he had not been born like other men, but "had sprung full-grown from a giant oak tree," and he felt there was nothing Pushmataha could not do. However, he was brave and fearless, a good friend to the white people, and an equally good enemy to the Creeks.

When they reached St. Stephens, he rode on into his own country, promising to return with his warriors in a few days. Captain Arnold delivered his message to Colonel Caller, told the story of Fort Mimms to the soldiers, and then went about his business in a kind of glorified atmosphere, impervious to any worry or trouble. He lived in anticipation of the day when he should ride to Mobile to claim his bride. He did not for a moment doubt that the other man would release the girl. He knew what

he would do under like circumstances,—think first of her happiness; and he was sure the other man would do the same.

Outside his door stood a straight young cypress tree, and each day with his knife he would cut a small notch in the bark. When there should be twenty-eight of them, then would his time of waiting be over.

Felice, too, lived in a state of happy anticipation. Never once did she doubt that when the last day came and Philip rode to claim her it would be their betrothal day. No matter what Payne's reply might be, she had sufficient confidence in her power to overcome Philip's scruples, because of his love for her.

She and her uncle were settled comfortably in a low, white-plastered house on Concepcion Street; at the side, enclosed by a high fence, was a little garden shaded by magnolia trees, fragrant with fall roses, and bright with yellow cosmos and purple asters. There was also a tiny, vine-covered summer-house. A mocking-bird lived in the big magnolia tree; often he would perch himself in the door of the little summer-house and sing to her. She called him Dick, and talked to him as if he were a human friend; and it seemed to her that he understood and answered with chirpings and twitterings and songs. Here in this garden the girl spent the days, waiting and dreaming.

One morning, soon after their arrival in Mobile, she was in the little summer-house, a bit of embroid-

ery lying idly in her hands. Dick was perched in the doorway, his little head cocked on one side, a most intelligent, sympathetic listener.

"I had a letter from him this morning, Dick; and I am so happy. He tells me how much he loves me. Twenty-one days yet to wait!" She sighed.

"Ah, but when he comes, Dick,—when he comes——"

Just here Master Dick, with a knowing nod of his little head, interrupted with a song,—a happy, joyful song.

"That is just the way I feel, Dick." And she rewarded the little singer with a piece of bread from her pocket, in which she always carried something for her little garden friend.

Judy came from the house, followed by a small, meek-looking man, in powdered wig, and well-worn velvet coat of a past decade.

"Honey, dis heah man seem lik' he 'blige ter see yo'. Ah cain't unnerstan' nuffin he say; he speak some kin' 'er furrin langidge."

The little man bowed low, and spoke in French.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle. I am an artist,—M. Douret. I have seen mademoiselle on the street. I desire to make a miniature. Never have I seen a more perfect face; such beauty, such rare beauty! Mademoiselle is French?"

"My father was French."

"Ah, I was positive! Only the French have such combined beauty, charm, and grace. The American ladies—— Well, some are beautiful, some

charming, some gracious, but never all three. I desire to return to my beloved France, but I have no money. If mademoiselle,—I do not know the name, —would permit me to make the miniature, I would try to please."

"I was christened Eugénie Marie Félice du Vallon," replied the girl, "but that was too much name for a plain little American, so I have been Felice Lee since I came to America to live."

"Du Vallon? You were perhaps related to the Viscomte Henri du Vallon?"

"He was my father."

"Ah, I knew him well,—a handsome, gay, young man; very handsome, and very gay."

"Won't you sit down, M. Douret, and tell me about him, and about your beloved France?"

She listened eagerly to his stories of her reckless, handsome young father, of the glorious days at court before the Revolution, the days of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. He painted Paris to her as only a Frenchman can paint his adored Paris. When he finished she leaned back with a sigh.

"Some day I would like to go there."

"And now, mademoiselle, the miniature?"

"Paint it, M. Douret. And if you please me, it shall be my betrothal gift to my betrothed. But it must be finished within twenty-one days from this day."

"It shall be ready, mademoiselle, I promise you. And it shall be good. It could not be otherwise, with such a subject."

Each day the Frenchman came to the garden to work on the miniature, and the work progressed well. M. Douret was truly an artist, and Felice a perfect subject. The regular features and lovely golden-brown hair attested her beauty; the mouth, her charm and humor, and in the brown eyes, he caught the light that comes into a woman's eyes when she dreams of the man she loves.

Every day reports reached St. Stephens of Indian attacks on the white people across the 'Bigbee; the Creeks murdered, plundered, and burned wherever they found the settlers unprotected and at their mercy; women and children suffered alike with the men, for Creek warriors on the warpath had not one spark of mercy in their naked, red-painted bodies.

As news came of these outrages, the soldiers became more and more indignant and restless, more eager to go to the aid of the helpless settlers. Colonel Caller waited impatiently for orders and reinforcements from General Claiborne, but the days and weeks passed (Captain Arnold had cut the twenty-seventh notch on his tree), and still no word had come from General Claiborne. Colonel Caller sent for Arnold.

"Philip, I want you to go again to Fort Stoddert and urge General Claiborne to do something for us here at once. I cannot understand his delay. You will start immediately."

"Yes, sir. Colonel Caller, I would like to ride on to Mobile, if you do not object."

"Can't spare you that long, Philip. You must return at once with General Claiborne's orders."

"But it is most important, sir. It is now four o'clock. I can reach Fort Stoddert by two o'clock in the morning, and Mobile by noon to-morrow. I will promise to stay only an hour in Mobile and be back here by sunrise the next morning."

"All right, Philip, go ahead. But you will kill yourself and Mark, too. There must be a pair of red lips waiting in Mobile for a kiss. Be sure they don't keep you there."

"I will be back by sunrise the day after to-morrow," Arnold replied.

Mark, responding to the eager hand on the rein, flew along the road at a swift, steady trot,—the same road over which Arnold and Felice had traveled a month before. It was Indian summer; the air was mellow, and the hills ablaze with flames of poison oak and sumac; the oak trees were gorgeous in brown and gold and crimson; here and there a field lay brown and fallow after the harvest. The man, always so sympathetic to every touch of nature, drank in the beauty of what he saw, and whistled gayly as he rode, thinking of the beautiful girl waiting for him in Mobile.

His day,—the day they had spent together,—he lived over again as he rode along. Here was the spot where they had stopped to hear the little brown thrush; there, where the horse had stumbled. He smiled as Mark flew along the two miles they had walked after his recklessness; and here was the place

they had camped for the night, and she had sung "Robin Adair"—to him! And he had thought she was singing to the other man. A great overpowering desire to have her for his own, despite everything, possessed him. "What is a mere scruple of honor weighed in the balance with such love as mine? Nothing shall keep her from me. She is mine, mine, mine!"

At two o'clock he rode into Fort Stoddert, roused General Claiborne from his bed, delivered his message, saying he would be back by ten o'clock that night for his orders to Colonel Caller. Then, refusing the General's urgent invitation to stop for rest, he rode on into the moonlit night toward Mobile.

The words he had spoken kept running through his mind: "Nothing shall keep her from me. She is mine, mine, mine!" Even the sound of Mark's hoofbeats on the road seemed repeating the words,—"She is mine, mine, mine!"

He rode on until the grey light of dawn streaked the east. Suddenly he drew rein; it seemed to him that a voice had spoken to him. "Let absolutely nothing,—not even the woman you love,—come between you and your honor."

For a half hour he sat motionless on Mark's back, arguing with himself, fighting bravely with his conscience, using every weapon he could think of; but the still, small voice parried them all and in the end stood triumphant.

He drew from his bosom the little white, ivory-bound Book his mother had given him. She had

said it would help him in his hour of temptation. This was his hour. He opened it at random, and the first words that caught his eye were: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,"—one of the passages his mother had marked.

He closed the Book slowly, and he knew that, unless Felice could come to him freed from her betrothal to the other man, he must give her up.

Having settled the matter once for all, he started Mark and rode rapidly on, remembering only, with hope in his heart, that he loved Felice and that she loved him. At noon he rode down shady Concepcion Street, between magnolias and palm trees, and rows of low, white-plastered houses,—the banner of hope waving joyfully before him.

CHAPTER IX

THE OTHER MAN'S REPLY

All the morning Felice had waited in the little garden for the ring of Mark's hoofs on the street outside. It was the last day, and she knew that Philip would come. To be sure, the letter from Washington had not arrived, but that troubled her not in the least. Philip was coming; any moment might bring him; they were meant for each other; so nothing else mattered. She longed to feel his strong arms about her, and the touch of his lips on hers, his first kiss.

She made a lovely picture, in a simple white dress, sitting on a rustic bench under the great magnolia tree, her hair fastened with a snood of rose-colored velvet; her cheeks rosy with blushes as she thought of that first kiss; her brown eyes sparkling in happy anticipation. About her white throat was the narrow band of velvet, from which depended the little gold-barred, blue locket set with pearls, and on one slender bare arm was the quaint silver bracelet Philip had given her.

"That is the Creek word for love on this bracelet," she confided to Dick, perched on a low limb of the tree over her head. "Do you think he will like my betrothal gift, Dick? I think M. Douret

has made a very pretty miniature of me. He should go to Washington and paint Cousin Dolly, and Barbara, and the Randolph girls. But he is so eager to return to his beloved France! I wonder if I would have loved France like that, had I been raised there instead of in America. It must be very charming. But, no, no, Dick; I am so glad I do not live there; for then, probably, I would never have seen Philip. We haven't heard anything from Payne yet, but I do not care. I have always had what I wanted. I will have my way now. Philip loves me, and I have always had my way with those who love me. He cannot refuse to take me, and we shall be happy together, Dick. He is so noble and good and brave!"

Suddenly, she was aroused by the sound of voices in the house; her uncle and Judy were exclaiming and greeting a new arrival. She rose to her feet, her heart beating madly.

"At last," she murmured softly, "at last he has come."

The door opened, and a man hurried into the garden, down the path, toward her. At sight of him, Felice dropped back on the rustic seat, gazing with wide, astonished eyes, one hand raised to her breast.

"Payne!" she whispered, amazed.

The man,—young, handsome, and eager,—was beside her, calling her name, kissing her hands passionately. He would have taken her in his arms, but she pushed him back gently.

"Payne, Payne! Why, oh, why are you here?"

"Felice," he cried, passionately, "do you think I could stay quietly at home, and let that scoundrel steal you from me? Wait until I see him! Such presumption! A backwoods soldier! Just wait!"

The girl laid her hand gently over his mouth.

"Payne! You do not understand. He is a gentleman, and I love him."

"Felice!" he cried, crushing her hands in his, "you do not mean that. You cannot love him; you are mine."

"Listen, Payne." She laid her hands affectionately on his shoulders. "I cannot marry you, I do not love you in that way. I did not know what love was before, but I know now. I love you only as a cousin, or brother."

"That is all nonsense. You loved me well enough before you came down here. Come home with me, and break the spell this adventurous soldier has cast over you. It is only a passing fancy; you will soon forget him."

Felice shook her head.

"No, Payne; it is love. I cannot be happy without him. You will release me? You love me only as I love you. Some day you will find the one woman for you. We could not be happy together."

"You are the one woman for me, and I cannot be happy without you."

"But I cannot marry you, Payne; it is impossible. I would be miserable; I would hate you."

The boy's handsome dark face set sternly.

"I will never willingly give you up," he cried.

"And I will settle with this other fellow when I see him. You will marry me when you are at home,—when you are yourself again. Felice,"—a note of pleading came into his voice,—"I cannot live without you. You mean life and everything to me. Without you I would go straight to the devil."

At this moment the door of the house opened, and Captain Arnold stepped into the garden. Had Mr. Lee been in the house, he would probably have held Philip there until Felice and Payne had finished their interview; but Judy " 'lowed they jis as well git togeddah en' scrap it out."

Arnold hesitated; his instinct told him at once who was the handsome stranger beside Felice. He would have turned back into the house, but the girl called him. He went to her, kissing her hand, and acknowledging with a cool bow the introduction to the other man.

"Payne," the girl said gently, "I am sure Uncle Maurice and Judy are eager for news from home. In half an hour you may return here." The young man bowed slightly, and, without a word, went into the house, anger and resentment raging in his heart against this intruder, who had come between him and his betrothed.

Felice led the way to the little vine-covered summer-house. She sat on the bench, and Philip knelt beside her, taking her hands in his.

"He has refused." It was a statement rather than a question.

"Yes."

"Is there no way to move him? Surely, if he loves you,——"

"I am afraid not. I have tried. But why should we let him ruin our happiness? I cannot marry him; he will be unhappy anyway; why should three of us suffer, when two of us might be happy? It will not be any harder for him if we are happy, nor any easier if we are unhappy."

"We would be happy for a while, but later you would not respect me, nor could I respect myself, knowing that I had done a dishonorable thing. I do not blame him for refusing: he was betrothed to you; he loves you, and now he feels that I have intruded and stolen your love from him. It is natural for him to feel as he does, but I had hoped he might be unselfish enough to give you up for your own sake."

"You are selfish, too, Philip; you are thinking only of yourself. You will have your work to do in the world. A woman's work is in making the man she loves happy. Take that away from her, and life holds nothing for her. Love is only a part of your life; to me it is everything. You say, if Payne loves me, he should think first of my happiness. You say you love me, yet you do not think first of my happiness."

"I do love you, Felice, more than all the world,—more than life."

"And I love you, Philip." She rose and stood facing him. "Here I am, Philip. Take me and let us forget everything else but our love."

For one wild second the man was tempted. He took a step toward her, raising his arms eagerly; then he remembered, and his arms dropped to his sides, his head bent forward miserably.

"Felice, I wish to heaven I could! But I cannot."

The girl stood before him, pale and proud, her head held high.

"I am waiting," she said. "Do you take me or reject me?"

"Felice, you are cruel."

"Then you reject me?"

He covered his face with his hands, but did not answer. She was very angry, and stood like some cold, calm marble statue. There was a step outside in the garden.

"Very well," she went on proudly. "You have had your chance. Payne!" she called; and the young man appeared in the doorway. "This gentleman esteems his scruples higher than my hand. If you are not troubled in the same way, here is the hand he has rejected; it is yours."

"Felice," cried Payne Todd, joy and passion lighting his dark face. He took the hand eagerly, kissing it again and again.

The girl did not look again at Arnold; she could not bear to see the hurt misery in his grey eyes; he bowed his head and, like a man condemned to die, left the garden, mounted Mark, and rode away.

In the little summer-house, Payne held the girl's hands in his, pouring out a stream of passionate love words, but she heard none of them; she was

straining her ears to catch the sound of Mark's retreating hoof-beats.

"Felice," said Payne, jealousy taking hold of his heart; for even though he had won her hand, he knew well that the other man had carried her heart away with him, "he does not love you, or he would not have given you up so easily. No power on earth could make me give you up of my own free will. He does not love you as I do."

The girl looked at him steadily and spoke in a low voice.

"There you are mistaken. He loves me so much that he would die before he would come between me and my happiness, as you have done."

Payne did not answer, but the jealous rage waxed strong against this man who had stolen Felice's heart from him.

M. Douret now hurried into the garden, with many apologies.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle. I hope I am not too late. It was a bit of the hair that I could not get just right. But it is all finished, and I hope you will like it." He held the miniature towards her.

"Take it away!" she cried. "I do not want to see it. I do not want it now. I will send your money to-morrow. But take the miniature away!"

"May I not see it, Felice? May I not have it?" Payne asked eagerly.

"No!" she cried passionately. "No! No!" And M. Douret wondered as he slipped out of the garden, the miniature still in his hand.

Captain Arnold, riding alone through the afternoon, stopped at Fort Stoddert for General Claiborne's orders, then, like a man in a dream, he rode on through the night, repeating over and over to himself the words: "She does not love me! She does not love me! She could not have been so cruel! If she loved me, I could bear the losing of her,—but now——"

And all through the long night Felice sobbed on her pillow, whispering his name mingled with words of love.

CHAPTER X

THE HOLY GROUND

Captain Arnold, when he reached St. Stephens, was again the same grave, taciturn soldier he had been before Felice came into his life, bringing sunshine and joy. The shadows upon his life were even darker; all hopes and plans for the future were gone; the shadow of tragedy had deepened in his grey eyes; the path of the future stretched out before him, barren and hopeless, and in his heart he prayed that a Creek arrow might end it all for him soon.

The message that he had brought from General Claiborne was:

"I will join you at St. Stephens at once with reinforcements. We will march immediately into the Creek country and put an end to this war, without further delay. The British are landing fresh supplies and ammunition at Pensacola for the Indians. Andrew Jackson, with the Tennessee militia, is marching south from Nashville to aid us."

St. Stephens was in a state of eager excitement at this news, and preparations were hurriedly made for the march. Pushmataha, the Choctaw chief, who had arrived with his warriors, had been presented with a suit of United States Brigadier regimentals,

and in this gorgeous uniform was promenading with his fat homely squaw, in imitation of the white men and their pretty wives. When he heard the news he hurried off to relieve himself of the unaccustomed stiffness and tightness of the new uniform, leaving the fat squaw to waddle off contentedly to look after herself.

General Claiborne arrived almost on the heels of his messenger, and without delay, leaving only enough men to defend the fort at St. Stephens, he crossed the Tombigbee, detailed more soldiers to the forts on that side of the river, and with the rest of the army,—about a thousand in all (regulars, volunteers, Choctaw warriors, and a few friendly Creeks), marched on across the Alabama, built a fort there, and filled it with provisions. The soldiers named it Fort Claiborne, in honor of the General.

Scouts were sent out, who reported many small bands of warriors, but were unable to locate the main body of the Creeks. For a month the army waited impatiently at Fort Claiborne, while scouts scoured the country in every direction, but without result. A few days before Christmas the weather, which had been mild and pleasant, suddenly turned bitter cold; the provisions were getting low; the soldiers were not clothed for severe weather; many of the volunteers had enlisted for only two months; their time was expiring, and, weary of the inactivity, they indulged in much talk of returning home.

Into this downcast, shivering camp came Capt. Sam Dale and a company of volunteers; and such

was the confidence of the soldiers in Sam Dale that they cheered up at once.

"Dale'll find the Red Sticks for us. Where are they, Sam? Food's scarce around here, and drink scarcer yet! Got any tobacco?"

Captain Dale did not know the whereabouts of the Creeks, but he was willing to start out to find them.

"Take as many men as you need, and don't come back till you find the Indians. We must find them soon, or I won't have any army; they'll all desert," said General Claiborne.

Dale wanted only one man to accompany him, and asked Arnold if he would go. Philip assented eagerly.

"We'll be back inside of two days," Dale said to the men; "and you be ready to march then."

Sougo wanted to go too, but Arnold sent him back. He stood sullenly watching the two men as they rode away. A little later, mounting an Indian pony, he followed stealthily after them.

"There are several places the Creeks might be. We'll try the Holy Ground first," said Dale.

"But surely they haven't gone there yet. That is a sort of last resort for them when they are really afraid," replied Arnold.

"They're scared all right," Dale replied; "and they need to be. When we get through with 'em there won't be more than a smattering of 'em in this territory."

All day they rode to the north, without seeing or

hearing anything of the Indians. About dusk Sam reined in his horse.

"We better go the rest of the way on foot," he said. "We ain't more than two miles from the Holy Ground."

They tied their horses and started on afoot, every sense alert for any sign of warriors. They had gone a mile or more, when, as if by magic, out of the darkness rose the Indians, and the two were surrounded and relieved of their weapons before they could turn a hand.

"Who are you and why are you here?" demanded one of the Indians, and Arnold recognized the voice of Red Eagle. He laid his hand quickly over Dale's mouth to prevent his speaking.

"My name is Arnold. In the name of the white man's God, I ask that you release us."

"I cannot do that," Red Eagle replied in English. "You are spies, caught half a mile from the sacred Holy Ground. But I promised my Chiaha no harm should come to you by me. Obey quietly. I save you if I can."

"And my friend?"

"No, I cannot promise to save him."

"We have nice bonfire to-night," said one of the warriors, "nice bonfire!"

The warriors marched their two prisoners to the Holy Ground,—a spot believed by the Creeks to be so guarded and protected by the Great Spirit that no white man dare cross its sacred boundaries. In the center was a high pole, on which were hundreds

of scalps,—a sort of trophy-pole, where warriors hung the bloody trophies of their massacres. There were also several stakes erected around the trophy-pole, with piles of wood beneath, ready to be lighted under the next white victims to be tied to the stakes.

The warriors who had captured Dale and Arnold wanted them tied to the stakes without delay, but Red Eagle claimed them for his prisoners, and refused to permit the "nice bonfire" until the next day. The hands and feet of the prisoners were tied securely with leathern thongs, and they were thrust roughly into a tent to await their fate.

Before daybreak the next morning a slender, brown-skinned figure on a flying Indian pony rode into Fort Claiborne shouting wildly:

"Warriors at Holy Ground! Take Captain Dale and Captain Arnold prisoners!"

It was Sougo, who had followed the two men all day, and was close behind them when they were captured by the warriors. He had ridden hard all night to get aid for his "white chief" and Sam Dale.

Within fifteen minutes the army, with General Claiborne at the head, was marching eagerly through a cold, drizzling rain toward the Holy Ground. The men were half clothed and half starved, but there was no sound of complaint nor grumbling now. They were in action, and they knew that unless they reached the Holy Ground soon the lives of two of their most popular captains would be sacrificed on the altar of Creek savagery. Perhaps even now it might be too late.

"If we are too late," one man said, grimly voicing the thought of all the others, "if we are too late, every Red Stick on the spot will pay with his life."

Within the sacred limits of the Holy Ground, wherein no white man dared intrude lest the Great Spirit strike him dead, Red Eagle was counseling his warriors to make peace with the white men. He remembered his promise to the white man's God; then, too, he had greater foresight than his brothers. He saw what must inevitably be the end, should they continue fighting.

"My brothers," he said earnestly, "let us make peace with the white men before it is too late. If we do not, they will conquer us and drive us away. The Chief Claiborne is marching on us from the south, Jacksa Chula Harja, from the north."

The Creeks feared "Old Man Jackson," as they called Andrew Jackson, more than they feared any other white man. But they had great faith in the Holy Ground, the Great Spirit, and their chief. Red Eagle continued to speak for peace until Grey Wolf sprang forward, facing him.

"You are a friend to the white people! You protect them! You talk for peace! Even now you have two white men in your power. Why do you protect them? Are you planning to let them go?"

Red Eagle stood his ground proudly.

"If I do counsel peace, it is for our own good. I have never done anything to betray my people. No man dares to say I have been unfaithful."

"Then," cried Grey Wolf, "bring out your prisoners, and let us tie them to the stakes."

The other warriors took up the cry. Red Eagle faced them fearlessly.

"No," he cried, "they are my prisoners. I will not give them up until I am ready."

"Then we will take them, and kill you if you interfere."

A dozen warriors dragged Dale and Arnold from the tent and tied them to the stakes. Two warriors, with burning brands, stood ready to light the wood beneath, but they were interrupted by the arrival of an Indian runner.

"Soldiers!" he shouted, pointing. "To the South! Comin' fast!"

The firebrands were dropped, and the victims at the stakes forgotten. The "nice bonfire" would have to wait until after the battle, when it could be enjoyed at leisure.

The warriors turned to Red Eagle for orders.

"Part of you make a pile of lightwood across the front for breastworks; the rest come with me."

"The women and children must go across the river," the chief ordered. The others protested that this precaution was unnecessary, but Red Eagle, knowing what the outcome of a battle was likely to be, insisted, and himself assisted in conveying the women and children across the Alabama to his own lands beyond the river. Chiaha came from the cabin to meet him.

"What is it, Lamochattee?"

"Soldiers!" he replied briefly; "the women and children must stay here until the battle is over."

"You think they may capture the Holy Ground?"

"Yes."

"But the Great Spirit will strike them dead."

"Chiaha, the Great Spirit exists only in the minds of our people, and is powerless in the presence of the white man's God, as are all products of our minds, no matter how great they may seem."

"Then," she said, smiling, "I shall pray both to the Great Spirit and to the white man's God to keep you safe. Surely, together they can protect you."

"Ah, Chiaha, your faith is not strong in either, else you would be willing to trust the one or the other."

"My faith is in you," she replied simply, laying her hand on his arm.

"When this battle is over, Chiaha, I am determined to fight no more. If the white man's God spare me this time, I live henceforth in peace. Goodbye, little one."

He strode off into the woods towards the river; the girl watched him, breathing a prayer for his safety.

General Claiborne arranged his men around the Holy Ground in the shape of a horseshoe, and ordered the attack to be made at once. The warriors fought bravely, Red Eagle in their midst, urging them on. But the soldiers swarmed over the pile of wood, and when they saw the two white men

tied to the stakes, they shouted to one another: "By heaven, we are just in time!"

Arnold and Dale, bound to the stakes, watched the fighting, helpless to assist, except by shouting encouragement; uncertain whether when the battle was over they would be free men, or—"nice bonfire."

The warriors fought desperately, their faith in the Great Spirit and the Holy Ground so strong that they felt they must win; but the soldiers drove them slowly back, back, back toward the river. Then, realizing that the Great Spirit had deserted them, probably he was for some reasons angry with them, they turned and fled, scrambling into the boats, some even swimming the river to the other side.

Red Eagle stood his ground until all the warriors had fled, deserting him. The boats were loaded and rowed away, leaving him alone and quite at the mercy of the soldiers. But Red Eagle was not to be easily captured. Jumping on his grey horse Arrow, standing near, he rode at top speed toward the river, digging his heels into the horse's flanks, and crying, "Yo ha! yo ha!" Without a pause, Arrow took the leap, fifteen feet into the river below.

The Indians, on one bank of the river, and the white men on the other watched the daring leap breathlessly, and a shout went up from both banks, when horse and rider rose to the surface of the water and swam on across the river. A soldier fired, cutting off a piece of Arrow's mane. When

he aimed again Arnold touched his arm. "Don't shoot!" he said quietly, "he saved my life and Dale's."

The Choctaw warriors took possession of the Holy Ground, and within a half-hour the sacred spot had been burned and pillaged, and the Choctaws bore aloft in triumph a string of Creek scalps.

After the battle General Claiborne spoke to his army.

"I believe the Creeks are about conquered. One more battle will finish them. You are poorly clad, and have been poorly fed; many of you have stayed with the army, though your time has expired. We are going to march home, and disband, leaving General Jackson and his Tennessee militia to finish the Creeks. I want a volunteer to find General Jackson, who is somewhere to the north of here, and give him this information."

Captain Arnold stepped forward.

"Thank you, Captain Arnold. You understand this will take you through a wild country and will expose you to great dangers?"

"I understand."

"Very well."

"Three cheers for Arnold!" shouted a soldier. The cheers were heartily given.

When Arnold was ready to start he asked Sougo if he wanted to go. The boy shook his head, pointing to a scalp fastened to his belt.

"No go with you this time. This Grey Wolf's scalp. Go nail it to tree 'side Sehoy's grave."

The boy had settled the score with his Indian stepfather.

It was through a pathless forest, in constant danger from hostile Creeks and wild animals, that Captain Arnold rode alone to find General Jackson. One day, following the banks of the Coosa River, he came upon a white settler, the first man he had seen since leaving the army. The man sat on the bank fishing. Arnold drew rein and spoke to him.

"How do, sir? Having any luck?"

The man removed the corncob pipe from his mouth, and lifted a good-sized string of fish into view.

"Fair," he answered.

"I am looking for General Jackson," said Arnold. "Can you tell me anything about him?"

"I ain't seed him, and I ain't heerd him; but my boy Jim says he's camped up the river aways, at Ten Islands. Jim says he's been cleanin' the Upper Creeks off'n the map up thar."

Arnold thanked him, told him the news from the South, and rode on.

"Jis' foller the river," the man called after him.

After following the river for some time, Arnold came upon two more men,—one, a roughly-dressed frontiersman, tall and broad of shoulder, with a heavy beard and pleasant eyes.

"Hullo, stranger!" the man greeted him cordially. "Where from?"

"From General Claiborne, in the South. I am looking for General Jackson."

"Well, you've struck the right path. Come on, Wilson, we'll ride back with him. We're Jackson's scouts. My name's Crockett,—Davy Crockett. Maybe you've heard of me. What's the news from the South?"

Arnold told them of the victory at the Holy Ground.

"Old Hickory's been doing things too. At Talluschatches and Auttose and Talladega, jes' cleaned 'em up."

In a little while they reached the camp at Ten Islands, on the Coosa, which had been named Fort Strother. Crockett took Arnold at once to the general's tent, raised the flap, and pushed him inside.

Arnold saw a tall, rather gaunt man, in shabby clothes, sitting tilted back in a chair, with his feet, in rusty, high topped boots, on the table. He was in deep thought and paid no heed to the young man's rather unceremonious entrance. Arnold looked at him curiously as he waited. The general's head was large and strong, with a great shock of bristling iron-grey hair; his face was seamed and wrinkled and sternly set, and his left arm was in a sling,—the result of a duel fought just before leaving Nashville. He wore an old Spanish-blue coat and frayed trousers, and, pushed well back on his head, was a well-worn leathern cap.

Suddenly the rusty boots came down from the table, with a bang; the man seemed all at once alive with nervous, restless energy. Arnold felt a pair

of fierce, black eyes, under bushy, heavy brows, looking at him.

"Well?" General Jackson spoke sharply, removing the corncob pipe from his mouth.

"I come from General Claiborne, sir, to report a victory over the Creeks at the Holy Ground; loss, one; wounded, twenty; Creek loss, thirty-three; wounded, unknown. General Claiborne's army is half starved, half frozen, and his soldiers have had no pay for months. The term of enlistment of many of them has already expired, and that of many others expires within a few days; so he has decided to disband them at once. He thinks you will have no difficulty in putting an end to the war. One more decisive encounter with the Creeks will finish them. And then, he says, you may have to settle with the Spanish and English at Pensacola."

"Creeks and Spanish and English be damned! I can whip 'em all, and not half try, if I can get supplies. My men are half starved, too, and half naked. I've been waiting a month for supplies, which should have been here long ago. You wish to remain with us?"

"Yes, sir."

"Davy," he called to the scout, "take this young man to General Coffee. Tell him here's a new captain for Bacon's volunteers."

General Coffee was kind and genial, greeting Philip cordially. He inquired about affairs in the south, and told of their march from Tennessee and

of their encounters with the Upper Creeks and of the victories over the redskins.

"General Jackson says you are to command Bacon's volunteers. They're a brave company,—lost their captain at Talladega. Come, sir; I will present them with a new one."

CHAPTER XI

M. JEAN LAFITTE, FRENCH GENTLEMAN

Mr. Lee lingered in Mobile, going about here and there in the Mississippi territory, preaching and helping the newly appointed young ministers to get a start in their work. His departure was further delayed by the reluctance of his niece to return to Washington. The girl permitted Mr. Todd to spend many hours in her company, though most of the time she was more or less unaware of his presence. Even though he could spend a certain part of each day with his betrothed, Mr. Todd was not enjoying life; to make love to a young lady whose mind is dwelling constantly on someone else, to be permitted merely to kiss a cold, unresponsive little hand, was most unsatisfactory to an ardent lover.

As for Felice, Payne bored her unspeakably, and she regretted her second promise to marry him. Her mind and heart were somewhere to the north, fighting Indians with Captain Arnold. Rumors of her beauty and charm spread in Mobile, and the society of the little place was eager to welcome her with open arms, but she was in no mood for social interests, and day after day she sat quietly in the little garden.

Payne was driven almost to despair by her behavior toward him, but to all his protests she replied calmly:

"You know, Payne, I do not love you. If, knowing that, you are not willing to take me, you are quite at liberty to leave me."

But the young man had no thought of giving her up; he would have her at any cost. Inwardly he cursed Captain Arnold for an interfering scoundrel, and would have wreaked his vengeance on him, if he had had a chance.

One morning he was lingering about the little tavern, waiting for the mail to arrive. The taproom was crowded with men of all classes,—planters, sailors, soldiers, hunters,—some of them French, some English, some Spanish, some Indians, and a few sturdy American-born citizens. All were drinking ale, or wine, and talking loudly in their several different tongues.

In the midst of the confusion of tongues, a messenger dashed up to the tavern, sprang from his horse, and entered.

"News!" he cried loudly, mounting a chair. "General Claiborne beat the Creeks on their own sacred Holy Ground and drove them off. He's disbanded the army and come back to Fort Stoddert, leaving 'Old Hickory' to finish the Creeks. Give me a drop of something wet. I'm dry as a powder-horn."

Mr. Todd listened while the man, surrounded by noisy soldiers, between gulps of ale, recounted the

details of General Claiborne's expedition against the Creeks. The name of Arnold reached his ears several times. When he could reach the man, he asked in a low voice:

"Did Captain Arnold return with General Claiborne to Fort Stoddert,—Captain Philip Arnold, I mean?"

"I know who you mean. There ain't but one Captain Arnold in this territory and he's worth a dozen ordinary men. No; he didn't return."

"You don't mean he was——"

"Killed? No. Claiborne sent him north to find Old Hickory. Know Arnold?"

"Yes."

"I hope you appreciate the honor. He's worth knowin'."

Payne thanked the man for his information, slipped a dollar into his hand, and receiving his mail, which had arrived, he left the tavern,—a plan developing in his mind as he walked down the street.

He found Felice sitting in the garden where he had left her, a lace shawl about her shoulders, her hands lying idly in her lap. She took the one letter and the papers that he handed her, glanced through them, and gave them back to him.

"The letter is from Barbara. She tells of a wonderful victory won by young Oliver Perry on Lake Erie, by which he has taken the control of the lakes away from the British. She says he sent General Harrison this message: 'We have met the enemy, and they are ours—two ships, two brigs, one

schooner, and one sloop.' He is in Washington now and is quite a hero. At Mrs. Madison's ball the other night he brought a flag captured from the British, and marching down the room, laid it at Mrs. Madison's feet. It was very thrilling. Congress has made him a captain and given him some gold medals, and he is quite the hero of the hour. The girls have all fallen in love with him." She handed him the letter. "Read it, if you wish."

She watched him as he sat beside her, leisurely reading the letter, and then the papers. He knew there was a question she was eager to ask him, and he waited, ready with his answer.

"It is chilly this morning. Uncle Maurice has returned, and says we must start home soon." She paused, trying to speak indifferently, but Payne had learned to recognize the note of intense eagerness, under the attempted indifference. "Was there —was there any news at the tavern this morning?"

"Yes."

Felice turned startled eyes toward Payne. Each morning she had asked the same question, each time the answer had been "No."

He told her of the news the messenger had brought.

"General Claiborne has disbanded his army and returned." She repeated the words after him: "Were there—were there many killed in the battle?"

"A good number, I think."

"Did Captain Arnold return?" Her fingers caught nervously at the fringe of her shawl, her face was pale, her breath came with effort.

Payne hesitated. It was harder than he had expected. It seemed hours to the girl before he answered.

"No, he did not return."

"You are sure? How do you know?"

"I asked the man especially, because I knew you would want to know."

"And he said——"

"Captain Arnold did not return."

"He was killed?" she asked, almost in a whisper. It was more a statement than a question; so Payne remained silent.

She rose to her feet, dropping the lace shawl unnoticed to the ground; her face was deathly pale, her eyes wide and staring, her hands clasped tightly on her breast.

Payne sprang to his feet, thinking she was going to faint. She stood for a moment whispering, "He is dead! He is dead!" then walked slowly to the house and entered.

Payne called to her, frightened at what he had done; but she did not seem to hear. Left alone, he gathered the lace shawl in his arms, kissed it passionately, and burying his face in its folds, sobbed like a child.

A little later in the day Mr. Lee came to him there.

"Felice is quite heartbroken over this news of Captain Arnold's death," he said gravely. "We must get her away from here at once. I cannot leave her alone. Will you see what arrangements you can

make? Inquire at the tavern for Captain Meyers; he has a little vessel in which we came down here."

Payne found Captain Meyers and made the necessary arrangements for his little vessel, the *Tiger Lily*, to sail with them the following day. Felice agreed to go, scarcely realizing what she was doing, scarcely caring where she went.

So the following day the *Tiger Lily* set sail out of Mobile Bay under a clear sky and with a fair wind.

Besides the skipper,—Captain Meyers,—and his crew, there were on board only Mr. Lee, Mr. Todd, Felice, and Judy. Judy was overcome with joy at the thought of going home.

"Bress de Lawd, we's gwine home! Hallelujah! Amen!" she sobbed, as they sailed over the clear, smooth waters of the bay. Later, when they reached the rougher sea, she lay in the cabin, hopelessly seasick. "Oh Lawdy!" she moaned. "Ah's gwine die! Ah wants ter die! Please, Marse Maw'ice, pray de good Lawd ter lemme die."

Felice sat on the deck, pale and beautiful. To Payne she seemed almost ethereal in her sorrow.

She had scarcely spoken a word since the day before, when he had told her the news from the tavern. She sat gazing at the distant shore, her sad eyes turned toward the land where she was leaving her heart. Many times Payne was tempted to tell her the truth, and then the jealous rage against Arnold would rise in his heart and forbid him.

They passed Dauphin Island and Mobile Point,

and sailed on into the Gulf. The sky was clear, the sea air invigorating,—it had even brought a touch of color to the girl's pale cheeks. Payne sat beside her trying to arouse her interest in their return home, in her friends there; but she heard very little of what he said. Captain Meyers sat near, spinning yarns of the sea for Mr. Lee. The mate called out that there was a ship signaling them to stop.

"Well, heave to, and see what they want," ordered the Captain, continuing his yarn.

The mate obeyed orders, and a few minutes later a handsome, daredevil young fellow, in picturesque red velvet jacket and small clothes and a broad-brimmed beaver hat with waving plumes, clambered on board, followed by a dozen rough-looking seamen.

At sight of the young man Captain Meyers sprang up, swearing roundly.

"I know you, Jean Lafitte, you infernal pirate! What do you mean, stoppin' a decent ship?——"

"Never mind the talk, monsieur. Get to work, boys, and see what treasure the old sea-devil has on board this trip."

The skipper continued to curse the pirate angrily; for, knowing that he was helpless to do anything else, he vented his rage in swearing. The picturesque young man suddenly caught sight of Felice, who had risen to see what was the trouble. The beaver hat came off with a flourish, and the young man bowed low.

"I may be a pirate, captain, but I am also a gentleman. I do not swear in the presence of ladies."

Captain Meyers reddened apologetically, and started off to vent his wrath on the pirate's men. A low whistle brought all the rough-looking dozen on deck.

"Back to the boat!" the young man ordered briefly. "And salute the lady before you go."

The men obeyed awkwardly, and climbed over the side into their own boat.

The young man advanced to Felice, respectful admiration in his black eyes.

"Mademoiselle, I most humbly beg your pardon. As the good skipper says, I am Jean Lafitte of Barataria Bay, the Terror of the Gulf. I came to carry off whatever treasure was aboard the *Tiger Lily*. But I was unaware of the treasure she had aboard this trip. I am sorry indeed to have disturbed you. Before I go may I have the honor?" He knelt to kiss Felice's hand. Payne would have interfered, but the girl motioned him to be quiet. Captain Lafitte kissed her hand, with as much grace and courtesy as a knight of the court.

"Mademoiselle, when you hear evil things said of Jean Lafitte,—and you will hear them, for everybody says them,—will you not speak this word in his favor: that whatever else he may be, at least he is a gentleman, a French gentleman?"

"Yes, monsieur," she replied, smiling.

"Thank you, mademoiselle. Farewell."

"That was a narrow escape," Captain Meyers said, as they watched the pirate's boat row away,—M. Lafitte waving gayly from the stern. "I've known 'em to carry off whole ships: cargo, crew, and all."

"But not with ladies aboard," suggested Felice.

"No, I never heard of any with ladies aboard. Lafitte is a handsome devil, and polite enough, but his crew is a bad lot, the whole bunch of 'em. A while back the governor offered a reward for Lafitte, dead or alive, and what did the rascal do but post notices all over the territory offerin' twice as much reward for the governor delivered to him dead or alive."

Then he went on to tell marvelous tales of this handsome buccaneer, the Terror of the Gulf; and even Felice listened with some interest; for although the old skipper condemned the young man's life and deeds, there was in his voice a note of admiration for the so-called pirate's fearlessness and daring.

Some days later, somewhere off the coast of the Northern Carolina, the *Tiger Lily* was again held up; this time by pirates of a different nature. They were a dozen stalwart marines from a British ship, the *Surprise,* headed by a handsome, arrogant young man in the uniform of an officer of the British navy.

Miss Lee was below when they came aboard, but hearing the noise and confusion, came on deck and stood, unnoticed, watching the scene.

Young Captain Carlisle ordered his men to search

the ship and bring all the crew on deck; from the number he picked three who were to be taken from the *Tiger Lily*, and enforced into the service of the British navy.

Mr. Payne Todd announced his identity with much dignity, and some pomp, expecting to overawe the British officer, but Captain Carlisle replied, laughing insolently:

"I don't care who you are. I have had the honor of encountering every person of importance in your whole country, from Mr. Madison down, since I have been searching your ships; and as it happens you are only the fourth young man who has declared himself to be Mrs. Madison's son. That lady must have an extensive family."

"Do you mean to question my word?" Payne demanded, angrily drawing his sword.

"No, indeed. Be whosoever it pleases you to be. It is no concern of mine. I——" he paused suddenly; his eyes encountered a pair of lovely brown eyes watching him with scornful amusement. He stood speechless, gazing at the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

Finding his attention attracted to her, Felice advanced a few steps toward the young officer.

"I have heard," she said scornfully, "that British gentlemen have a reputation for bad manners, but never before have I had such definite proof of their rudeness."

"I beg your pardon, madame," the young man stammered in embarrassment. "I was not aware of

your presence. I hope I may claim the title of gentleman; at least, in the presence of ladies."

"Then, if you are a gentleman, you will call your men and leave our boat at once. What right have you and your government to stop our boats and steal our good American citizens, and force them to serve in your navy?"

"We take only those who rightfully belong to us, —those who have deserted from our navy," Captain Carlisle replied.

"You know quite well that is not true. Those three men you have there, ready to carry off with you, have never seen England, or been aboard a British ship."

"Of course we cannot always be sure, but——"

"If you wish to convince me of your honesty in the matter, release those three men and leave us to proceed in peace."

"I cannot do that, madame. I am only doing my duty as an officer in his Majesty's navy. I am simply obeying orders."

"I am astonished that his Majesty permits so young and discourteous a man to wear an officer's uniform. If you will accept a little well-intentioned advice, return to your mother's knee and acquire the manners every young gentleman should have before he forsakes that refuge."

All on board were enjoying Captain Carlisle's discomfiture; even his own marines were grinning broadly. He decided he had best retreat with what dignity he could from so embarrassing a position.

Had he been an older man, he would have known better how to deal with the situation. But he was very young, rather afraid of ladies in general, and this particular young lady was very beautiful and disconcerting.

Bowing with dignity, he called his men, and climbed into his boat, which the sailors rowed rapidly back to the *Surprise*, leaving the *Tiger Lily*, with her passengers and crew, to proceed on her way in peace.

Captain Meyers sat on a coil of rope, holding his sides and laughing boisterously.

"You sure silenced that young chap, Miss Lee. He plumb wilted, like a gaudy flower on a hot day."

Felice smiled.

"If he hadn't been so very young, I shouldn't have dared talk to him that way. But I have learned from experience that a very young man is easily confused by a woman."

"Young!" exclaimed the Captain. "Yes, he is young, but no younger than you."

"No," she replied, "he is probably a few years older; but you know a woman is always older for her years than is a man."

CHAPTER XII

M. DE JOURNET CALLS ON GLORIOUS BETSY

In the drawing-room of her father's home in Baltimore, Madame Jerome Bonaparte,—once the glorious and fascinating Betsy Patterson,—was receiving a caller. It was ten years since "Glorious Betsy" had run away with the handsome young brother of Napoleon I and had been for a few months the most talked of woman in three countries,—ten years since the emperor had ruthlessly separated the young couple and refused to sanction their marriage. Since the birth of her little son she had lived quietly in Baltimore. She was still beautiful and charming, but more and more dissatisfied with the newness and crudeness of the American city, she constantly longed for the pomp and glory of the French Court, which had once seemed within her reach.

Her caller on this day was one M. André de Journet, late aide to his Imperial Majesty, but just now in great disfavor with the emperor. He had had the temerity one day to kiss one of the emperor's "favorites,"—much to the young lady's delight; for M. de Journet was young and exceedingly handsome, while his Majesty was fat and forty,—and it was their misfortune that his Majesty should part the

curtains and enter just at the crucial moment. The young lady was no longer a favorite, and M. de Journet was in exile from the court. But if the mission that brought him to the States should succeed, then would he be restored to favor. He was young and handsome, faultlessly dressed in the height of fashion. Madame noted with approval his courtly bearing and gracious manners.

"A thoroughbred gentleman," she thought, "how different from the boorish Americans."

And M. de Journet found Madame good to look upon. She was small of stature, but with imperious bearing, pure Grecian features, large, dark, intelligent eyes, and a winning smile. Not even at court had he seen a woman who understood better the arts of dress. She was wearing a dress of lavender mull, embroidered in designs of rose and laurel entwined in garlands, and about her shoulders was a shawl of exquisite Point d'Alençon.

M. de Journet gained his hostess' favor at once by delicate and pointed compliments, and quite won her heart when he said, bowing low:

"I am surprised to find so lovely a lady wasted on so barren a land. Madame belongs at court, which is the only suitable setting for so lovely a jewel. Madame's beauty and charm and wit would find true appreciation in Paris. The mission that brings me here is a secret one, which I am to confide to no one save you, Madame. His Majesty recommended you, as the one person most capable of aiding me."

Madame Bonaparte did not reply, but she was pleased, nevertheless. Despite his refusal to acknowledge her as his brother's wife, she greatly admired and respected her imperial brother-in-law.

"I am here to find one Mademoiselle Eugénie Marie Félice du Vallon, daughter of his Majesty's one-time friend and comrade, Vicomte Henri du Vallon. Do you know her?"

"Little Felice Lee! Very well indeed. She is called here by her Uncle's name. Mr. Lee is one of my father's best friends."

"Very good. His Majesty desires her immediate return to France, to take possession of certain property and money, which are rightfully hers, and to take the place at court befitting a daughter of the emperor's friend Vicomte du Vallon."

"That is quite impossible. Her uncle would never permit her to go. He hates all Frenchmen and everything French. The girl's mother married du Vallon much against the wishes of both her own family and his. Her married life was most unhappy, and Mr. Lee guards her daughter from Frenchmen as he would from the plague. Your mission is indeed a hopeless one."

"But I do not intend to consult the uncle at all. The girl is old enough to decide for herself. If we can persuade her to go,——"

"No; I cannot aid you. I am sorry. Mr. Lee and my father are devoted old friends. It is out of the question."

"But listen, madame. All I ask of you is this:

When I have persuaded her to go, will you agree to accompany us—as the girl's guardian, of course?"

"And be sent back before my boots touch French soil?" she asked bitterly, remembering the time when she had been refused the right to land on French ground.

"And be received," the young man spoke impressively, "at court, with your son, as members of the imperial family."

M. de Journet noted the effect of these words on his companion, then, turning his back, stood looking out of the window.

Madame's heart beat madly. Once again the pomp and glory of the French court seemed within her reach; this was what she had most dreamed of and longed for: that she and her little son Jerome should be received as members of the Emperor's family, that Jerome should be acknowledged as the Emperor's nephew. It was reported that the Emperor's son, the little King of Rome, was far from strong; perhaps,—who knew?—Jerome might even in time be Napoleon's successor. Many people had noted the strong resemblance between her boy and his royal uncle. And for herself would be the honor, homage, and pleasure that she craved.

"The Emperor," she asked suddenly, "does not mean the girl any harm?" Napoleon's one weakness was well known the world over.

"Any harm? Why should he? He has never seen her. It is true his Majesty has a weakness for the

fair sex; but he does not fall in love with names. It takes warm flesh and blood and beauty to charm him. He has never seen Mademoiselle du Vallon."

M. de Journet thought it unnecessary to tell madame that the Great Napoleon had fallen in love with a miniature, painted by one M. Douret, and exhibited by him in Paris; that since his first sight of the charming, beautiful face, crowned with golden-brown hair, he had been obsessed with a mad desire to see and possess the original; and if M. de Journet could gratify this mad desire, he was to be restored to favor at court. The Emperor was willing to do anything to accomplish his desire, even to receiving Madame Bonaparte and her son. But M. de Journet did not mention all this.

"All I ask of you is that you be in readiness to accompany us to France. The girl, of course, would not go alone with me. I will simply tell her Napoleon has sent for you to come, and that you are going. I will persuade her that it will be a good opportunity for her to go in your care. Are you willing to do this?"

Madame had already persuaded herself that she would comply with this request. She could see no harm in Felice's going to France, if she desired. She could return at any time to America. Why shouldn't the child see something of the world that existed outside of this stupid, provincial country?

"Yes," she said; "I will do as you say."

"I thank you, madame. I am confident you will

have no regrets. Will you now write a note addressed to me? Say this:

"M. DE JOURNET:

"I will meet you in Annapolis to-morrow morning for the voyage to France. Tell Miss Lee that I shall be delighted to take her to Paris in my care, should she decide to go."

"Sign your name, but no date. I will add the date later."

Madame wrote as he requested.

"Again I thank you. And now, madame, you must hold yourself in readiness to start at any time. I do not know how long it may take to persuade mademoiselle, but I trust it will not be long, and that before many weeks you and I and your little son will be in our rightful places at the court of France."

"Suppose you fail?"

"I shall not fail, madame. If Mademoiselle du Vallon is her father's daughter, she will go, for he loved Paris and the gayety and pleasures thereof better than life itself.

"*Au revoir*, madame, until we meet at Annapolis."

He kissed Glorious Betsy's hand gallantly, and left the house, setting out for Washington to accomplish his mission.

And Madame Bonaparte sat long after he had gone, dreaming of the honor and glory that would be hers as sister-in-law of the Great Emperor and mother of a possible future ruler.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME AGAIN

Without further incident, the *Tiger Lily* sailed up the Potomac, past Fort Washington and Mount Vernon, and reached the boat landing. Mr. Lee sent a messenger in haste for his carriage, and soon he and his niece were in their own home in Lafayette Square. Payne left them at the door, going to the President's house, across the square, to see his mother and tell her of their safe arrival.

He found her upstairs in her private sitting-room, —a large, cheerful room from which seemed always to emanate the personality of Mrs. Madison, charming, gracious, and hospitable. She was a handsome woman, with a rather tall, full figure, dark waving hair, and deep blue-grey eyes. The son was much like her, with the same dark waving hair and blue-grey eyes. She embraced him affectionately.

"It is good to see you again, Payne. I have missed you so much. How is Felice?"

"Very well, mother."

"She is,—she is going to marry you?" she asked anxiously. She was very fond of the girl, and her heart was quite set on having her for a daughter-in-law.

"Yes, she is going to marry me. Very soon, I think," Payne answered; but there was something in his voice that told his mother that he was not quite happy.

"I am so glad for you, my son." And catching up a shawl, she threw it about her shoulders, and hurried away to welcome the little cousin, who was soon to be her daughter.

News of their arrival had already spread, and she found Mr. Lee and Felice the center of a group of friends, who had gathered to welcome them home. She was startled at the change in Felice; the beautiful care-free girl that had left Washington a year before had returned a woman,—a woman that had suffered.

The girl's pale face brightened at sight of Mrs. Madison, and she flew into her arms.

"Cousin Dolly, I am so glad to see you again!" Cousin Dolly had been nearer a mother to her than anyone, and she loved her more than she loved any other woman.

"Come, dear, you are tired; come upstairs and rest. The friends will excuse you."

Upstairs in her own chamber, alone with motherly Cousin Dolly, Felice could hold back the tears no longer, and for the first time since Payne had told her of Arnold's death she wept.

Mrs. Madison, being a woman, knew from experience the relief that comes from a good shedding of tears; she held the girl gently in her arms, waiting for the storm to pass.

When Felice had become more quiet, Cousin Dolly asked gently:

"What is the trouble, dear? Won't you tell me?"

No answer.

"Is it about the other man?"

A stifled "Yes" came through the sobs.

"Perhaps it will help you to tell me, dear."

So Felice began at the beginning, and sobbed out the whole story on Cousin Dolly's sympathetic bosom. When the girl had finished the older woman was silent a moment before she spoke.

"Payne was wrong, dear. He should have released you when he found that you loved the other man so much. But it was because of his great love for you that he refused. You are everything to him; he has been a different boy since you promised to marry him. He has given up his old associates and has been so good and lovable. You still love him a little?"

The girl shook her head.

"My heart is dead, I think."

"But you will marry my boy, Felice? He cannot live without you."

The girl did not answer at once—after a little she spoke.

"Yes, I have promised to marry him, if he wants me without my love. My life is worth nothing to me now. If I can make him happy and save him from suffering what I have suffered, I will marry him."

Payne's mother clasped her tightly in her arms.

"You are a dear, sweet girl, Felice; and we will try so hard to make you happy,—all of us. You will marry him soon?"

"Not yet, Cousin Dolly,—not quite yet."

"In the summer, then?"

"Yes, in the summer."

"Listen, my dear. You think now that your heart is dead; that you can never love anyone. It is not dead,—only stunned. I thought once mine was dead,—with Payne's father. But I found there was room in my heart for another love without displacing the first. A woman must have someone to love; it would be too lonely with no one."

"There is room in my heart for only one, Cousin Dolly; but I will do what I can to make Payne happy." And Mrs. Madison knew in her heart that the girl spoke the truth. Felice was of the intense nature that loves but once, and that once with all the heart and soul.

When Mrs. Madison had gone, Felice sat looking around the pretty, familiar room. It seemed years instead of months since she went away. She found herself wondering that everything was the same,—the white walls and flowered chintz curtains, the mahogany bureau and four poster, the silver candelabra, and the comfortable chairs. She sat for some time looking at the portrait of her mother that hung above the fireplace,—a beautiful charming girlish face. She felt a sudden sympathy and longing for the young mother of whom she had not even the least remembrance.

With a sigh, she rose, removed her dress, slipped on a pink flowered silk dressing gown, and pulled the bell-cord for Judy.

Sitting in a low, comfortable chair she listened while Judy loosened the mass of golden-brown hair and brushed and talked.

"Hit shoh am good ter be home agin, honey chile, en' see all de folks. My Dilsey done marry en' got ez fine pair er twins eber yo' see sence yo' war born. En' what yo' spec? She gwine lemme name 'em. En' Ah's gwine gib 'em pow'ful good names, Ah is. Ah's gwine call 'em Samson en' Delilah,—dey's Biblicum names, dey is. En' Ah hopes dey grows up ter be ez good en' 'ligious as Marse Samson en' Miss Delilah in de Bible. Doan Mis' Dolly Mad'son look finer'n silk? She shoh am a han'some lady. But poh Marse Jeems! He look littler en' skinnier en' dried upper'n eber. My Sukey, she one of Mis' Dolly's house gals now. She say Marse Jeems jes' natchly 'bout wore plum out wid bein' Pressident. Say, honey——"

The door swung open suddenly, and a little figure in blue cloak and bonnet flew at Felice like a whirlwind.

"Felice, you darling!" she cried between kisses and embraces. "You will never know how I have missed you. I would have died of lonesomeness if you had stayed another week. Judy, you have not taken good care of her; she is pale. Oh, I am so glad to see you!"

"And I am equally glad to see you, Barbara. Take off your cloak and bonnet."

Miss Barbara took them off with a jerk, threw them on the bed, and sat down on a stool at Felice's feet,—her small piquant face aglow with excitement and happiness, her black eyes sparkling, and the dark curls rioting about her face.

"Barbara, you are like a dear little wild rose."

"I may be smaller than you are, but I am quite as old, so you needn't be so superior," Barbara pouted. "But tell me all about the terrible Indians and everything. And I have a lot of news to tell you."

"Go ahead with your news, dear. The Indians can wait."

Thus encouraged, Miss Barbara poured forth a stream of news of the past year: weddings and births, deaths, and parties, flavored here and there with a little spicy gossip.

"And, O Felice," she ended at last, "there is a most fascinating young Frenchman here now. His name is M. de Journet, and all the girls in town are in love with him."

"How about Miss Barbara Marshall?" Felice asked teasingly.

Barbara blushed furiously—"Of course not!"

"Still faithful to Mr. Bushrod Hunter? I thought surely you would have a new beau by this time."

"Stop teasing, Felice. But about this Frenchman: he is much interested in you, and has kept

asking when you would return. He says he saw a miniature of you somewhere."

Sally, the house girl, opened the door.

"Beg pardon, Miss Felice; but dey is some gem'-muns below ter see yo'. Marse Randolph en' Marse Dan Webster en' Marse Payne Todd en' Marse Irving en',—en' heaps mo'."

"Oh, do hurry, Felice!" cried Barbara.

"I judge from your great hurry, Miss Marshall, you rather suspect Marse Bushrod Hunter is one of the 'heaps mo'," laughed Felice as Judy helped her dress.

"He might be," Barbara replied demurely.

When the two girls descended the broad white steps into the drawing-room the young men gathered below swarmed about them. It was a fine group of young American manhood. Before the fireplace stood Mr. Lee, while beside him was a handsome, fair young Frenchman, making himself most agreeable to the older man. It was M. de Journet. As soon as he was introduced to Felice, the Frenchman took immediate possession of her, and charmed her with his courteous manners and ready wit. Mr. Bushrod Hunter was openly paying court to pretty Barbara in a corner; so the other young men gathered about Mr. Lee, who was a great favorite with them, and they listened eagerly to his story of adventures in the Southern Territory.

Payne Todd sat alone in a dark corner, watching Felice. He was glad to see her not quite so pale, and listening with some interest to M. de Journet.

Now and then in the midst of his narrative, Mr. Lee glanced with disapproving eyes at the debonair young Frenchman.

When he had finished, one of the young men requested Felice to sing, and the others joined in the request. M. de Journet led her to the pianoforte and stood watching her in open admiration.

"*Sacré!*" he said to himself, "I don't want to take her to the Emperor,—I want her myself. Such beauty, such charm, such wit!"

The young men surrounded her, each calling for a favorite song—"Annie Laurie," "Ein Feste Burg," "Last Rose of Summer," "Highland Mary," "Phyllis." She sang them all, and then her Uncle's favorite hymn,—in which they all joined,—"Come Ye That Love the Lord." Then, ignoring their further requests, she started softly, as though singing to herself:

"What's this dull town to me?
Robin's not near,—
He whom I wished to see,
Wished for to hear."

Her voice was low and thrilling with emotion, the young men listened in subdued silence; never before had they heard her sing so plaintively, so sweetly.

Finishing the song, Felice rose from the pianoforte, and, like one in a dream, left the room slowly, apparently unconscious of her guests. They looked at one another inquiringly. Barbara followed her and returned in a moment.

"Felice is indisposed; she begs that you excuse her."

Mr. Payne Todd, seated in his dark corner, was raging with jealousy.

"God!" he muttered, with clenched hands. "If she loved me like that!"

CHAPTER XIV

TOHOPEKA, THE HORSESHOE BEND

In February the 39th regiment of regulars, under Major Montgomery, joined General Jackson at Fort Strother. The regiment's ensign was a young fellow of twenty, by the name of Houston, a friend of Davy Crockett's. It was Davy who introduced him to Captain Arnold one evening as they sat around the camp fire.

"This is my friend little Sammy Houston," he said good naturedly. Little Sammy stood six feet two in his shoes, tall and straight as a young Indian. "Sammy's a nice boy, with a toler'ble big notion of his own importance. And, Sammy, this gentleman here is known 'round camp as Old Hickory's Pet. The old chap has gone plum crazy over him,—never seed him take such a notion to anybody before."

Young Sammy and Old Hickory's Pet eyed each other for a moment, and each felt that he was going to like the other.

"Sammy," Crockett drawled, "I hear you been goin' to school. What d'ye know?"

"More'n you do," retorted Sammy.

"What, for instance?"

By way of reply, Sammy began speaking in a

quiet, ordinary way, his eyes fixed on Arnold's face; and it was a minute or so before that young man realized that the boy was reciting from memory, Pope's translation of the "Iliad."

"Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess sing!
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The sons of mighty chiefs untimely slain;
Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore:
Since Great Achilles and Atrides strove,
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove."

The boy went on and on, scarcely stopping to draw breath:

"Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering to the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies,
They fall successive and successive rise.
So generations in their course decay,
So flourish these when those are passed away."

"'Tis man's to fight but heav'n's to give success—"

So the boy went on to the end,—while Davy listened in open-mouthed amazement, Arnold with pleased surprise.

At length Crockett spoke:

"I reckon you've got me all right, sonny. I couldn't learn all that,—not to save my skin. It's pretty good, too. I like that where it says man can fight but he can't win without heaven's help. Nobody knows that better'n I do. What in thunder made you learn all that?"

"Because I like it. I'd learn the Greek if I had anybody to teach me."

"That was very well done," said Arnold, smiling at Davy's bewilderment. "I know a little Greek, and will be glad to help you all I can."

"Thank you, sir," the boy replied gratefully.

They spent many evenings together, and Arnold became fond of the boy. Sammy didn't progress rapidly in Greek, but he learned to love his new friend.

As Davy Crockett had said, Arnold was known as Old Hickory's Pet. The evenings he did not spend trying to teach Greek to young Houston were spent in the General's tent. Andrew Jackson was very different from the younger man in many ways; he was uncouth, rough in appearance and manner, and had very little education; but Arnold found in him the qualities of manhood which he had learned to admire above everything else. Beneath the outward lack of polish and education was a true man.

"Do you know, Philip," said General Jackson one evening as he sat smoking his corncob pipe, his feet in the rusty high-topped boots propped up as usual on the table, "I don't know why you like me. You are just what I wish I could have been at your age, —educated, refined, and all that,—a gentleman. But what you can see to like about a rough old fellow such as I am, I don't understand."

"You are a gentleman," Philip protested. "Polish and education are all very well on the outside, but unless there is something more beneath, they are useless. Underneath you have more good qualities than any other man I have ever known."

"Ah, but I wanted the other things, too,—on the outside. I want 'em now; but I'm too old to learn. I never had no chance as a boy. My father died before I was born, my mother before I was grown. I grew up 'mongst horse-traders, gamblers, and drunkards; nobody cared what became of me. These evil influences left their mark on me."

"And in spite of them, you are brave and honest, kind and faithful."

"Well, I reckon I ain't any coward, and I'm as honest as most, and I ain't betrayed anybody yet."

"I know of one man," said Arnold, and there was a trace of bitterness in his voice, "who had everything in his favor,—a good home, education, love, opportunity, ability, and yet in the end,—he was not faithful."

The general looked at him quickly, inquiringly—

"Not you, Philip?" he asked anxiously.

"No, not me. And I pray God every day that I may live my life through without ever following in his steps."

"Tell me about him?" said the older man, with sympathy in his voice. Arnold hesitated a moment; long silence on the subject made him reluctant to speak; then, feeling the kindly sympathy and interest in General Jackson's manner, he told the whole story, beginning with the day he had stood beside his father in the little house in London.

When he finished, Jackson placed his pipe on the table, and going to Philip, laid his hand on the bowed head.

"You are fighting a brave fight, boy. Keep up courage! In the end you will win. But I think you take it all too hard. You have shouldered the responsibility for your father's guilt, when you are not in the least to blame; and the service you are giving your country ought to even the score,—not in the annals of history, but in the sight of your friends." He stood in silence, his hand still on the bowed head, thinking of the man who was known and despised the world over as a traitor,—once so brave, so fearless, so zealous, and then so treacherous.

"I wonder now," he said after a little, "if you would like a substitute father. Here I am, in need of a son, and you in need of a father. Of course I haven't got much education, or culture; but if you will take me, just as an honest man——"

"What are all the culture and education in the world weighed in the balance with honesty and integrity? What did they avail my father in his hour of temptation? I will consider it a great honor and privilege to be your adopted son." So from that day forth Philip Arnold had a father, Andrew Jackson a son.

"Don't feel too bitter against your father, Philip. He wasn't treated quite fair. Of course, that wasn't no excuse for his treachery; but he felt that his country didn't appreciate his services; some of his brother officers were jealous of his ability, and worked against him, so that others were promoted ahead of him, who did not deserve to be. He felt the slight deeply, and in a fit of anger, did—what

he did. And he repented bitterly I know. You are the son of his remorse. In you are embodied his thoughts of repentance, his realization that honesty, integrity, and duty come first. These qualities are stronger in you than if you were the son of an ordinary father. After all,—in spite of the shame and disgrace,—it ain't such a bad heritage he left you. You have the right in this free and democratic country to make a name for yourself. In England, or on the Continent, men are judged more or less by what their fathers were, but in this country,—no. You've heard of Johann Ashdoer? His father was a German serf; but Johann was ambitious and didn't settle down to follow in his father's steps and drudge away his life as a serf. He came over here thirty years ago, and to-day is the richest, and one of the most respected men in this country. The Government had to borrow money from him to carry on this war with England. He became what he is by being shrewd, honest, and an incessant worker. So, you see, you've got as much chance as any man to make a name for yourself and live down your father's disgrace."

When he went to sleep that night, Arnold felt more respect for his own father than he had ever felt before, and a deeper love for this man who had adopted him as a son.

The days slipped by, with only here and there a skirmish with the Indians. The Creeks were gathering at Tohopeka, on the Tallapoosa River, fortifying the Horseshoe Bend, and preparing to make a

last desperate stand. Jackson planned to attack them as soon as he could receive supplies and provisions, for which he had sent. The weather was cold and dreary; much of the time a drizzling rain was falling, food was scarce, the men were living on scanty rations. They complained bitterly, not against these hardships, but against their long, enforced idleness.

One morning, Sam Houston whispered in Arnold's ear:

"If you want to see some fun, Captain, come with me and Davy."

"Where you going?"

"Never you mind, just come along. Besides the fun, you'll get the first square meal you've had in months."

"A square meal sounds good, so I'll come."

The three men stole away quietly from the camp, crossed the river, and walked for a couple of hours through the woods. Sam and Davy refused to say where they were bound for, but dropped interesting hints about roast ox meat, apple brandy, Virginia reels, red lips, and rosy cheeks.

At length they reached an open place on a plantation, where a large bonfire was blazing, and about it were gathered a great many people. Arnold recognized the signs of a barbecue. Half an ox was roasting over the fire, a long table was spread with great platters of corn and rye bread, and there were whole barrels of apple rum, peach-brandy, and ale. This was indeed a most welcome sight to three hun-

gry soldiers who had been living mostly on parched corn and water. They sniffed the air hungrily, and their mouths watered in pleasant anticipation.

Gathered about was a motley crowd of people,—planters, backwoodsmen, Spaniards, Frenchmen, half-breed Indians, and settlers with their families; and in the background negro servants, with bulging eyes and watering mouths, awaited their turn at the table.

When the feast was over, and everybody was satisfied and happy, there was dancing in the nearby cabin to the music of fiddles.

Davy and Arnold did not join in the dancing,—Davy being a staid old family man, and Arnold being quite too full of roast ox meat to feel very agile; so they stood at a window looking on and smoking their pipes. But young Sammy, being "heart whole and fancy free" and overflowing with youthful spirits, joined in the fun, and became the beau of the evening.

And Sammy was quite impartial in the selection of his partners; half-breed girls in fringed buckskin, French girls in worn finery of better days, dark-eyed Spanish beauties, sturdy daughters of pioneers,—it mattered not to Sammy what they were so long as they had rosy lips and light feet. And he ended each dance with a resounding kiss on his partner's rosy cheek. The girls were delighted with him, the older folks looked on with tolerant amusement, but the other young beaux were madly jealous. At length Davy and Arnold, alarmed by the dark looks

and angry words that followed the joyous Sammy about the room, dragged him reluctantly away, lest the wrathful youths, overcome by their jealousy, should do him bodily harm.

At the end of March word reached Fort Strother that the Creek warriors were all gathered at Tohopeka, the Horseshoe Bend. This Horseshoe Bend was formed by one of the numerous serpentine curves of the Tallapoosa River and was almost entirely surrounded by water. With a strong breastwork of logs across the narrow neck of land, the place seemed to the Indians an impregnable fort; but not to General Jackson.

"They're in a trap, like so many rats," said he, "a trap of their own setting; early to-morrow we'll start south to capture the trap and drown the rats."

But only a few of his men agreed with him. It was useless to attack the place, most of them said; there was no possible chance of capturing it; they had no supplies; for weeks they had kept alive on an incredibly small amount of food; the strain was beginning to tell on them, and there was much grumbling among the soldiers. When the news spread that Old Hickory was going to make an attack on the Horseshoe Bend the grumbling became louder.

"I'm as willin' to fight as any," growled Wilson the scout, "when I ain't three-quarters starved and two-thirds naked. Ain't no use attackin' them Creeks at Horseshoe, anyhow; there is at least a thousand of 'em there, an' they'll stand behind their breastworks an' pick us off by the hundreds."

"Old Hickory says they're caught like rats in a trap," said young Sam Houston.

"Huh!" grunted Wilson, "Old Hickory don't know everything they is to know."

"But he knows mighty near all they is to know about fightin'," retorted Sam.

Opposition to General Jackson's plans was specially strong in the militia, half starved and poorly clad against the raw March weather. The murmuring grew stronger and stronger, until at last the men declared in no mild nor uncertain terms their determination to go home at once, unless supplies were forthcoming. When this declaration reached General Jackson's ears he dropped his pipe, caught up a rifle in his left hand, and going out of his tent, faced the mutineers, saying sternly:

"I hear there is some talk of desertion in this militia. If there's a man among you who ain't soldier enough to stay with this army, let him step forward and I'll relieve him of further duty." After a moment's hesitation, Wilson the scout stepped forward sullenly.

Old Hickory's eye did not waver, nor his left arm, aiming the rifle, tremble.

"Wilson," he said slowly, "I don't want to shoot you, but if you ain't back in line in ten seconds, I'll give you a chance for eternal rest. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven——" Wilson saw "Shoot" in the fierce black eyes, and suddenly stepped back into line.

Jackson lowered his rifle, and spoke again to the men,—this time the sternness was gone; for he said in a kindly, sympathetic tone:

"You boys don't know how it grieves me to see you sufferin' for lack of food and clothes. God knows I have done everything possible to get supplies for you. It's easy enough to be brave in the excitement of battle, but it takes true soldiers to stand the hardships you have stood the last few months. But we can't give up now. The Creeks have shut themselves up at Tohopeka. When we have settled with them, then, you can go home."

"Three cheers for Old Hickory!" cried a soldier, and the militia joined in to a man.

The army formed into line, and the order came, "Forward, march,—to the Horseshoe Bend!"

"We're going to get the Red Sticks,
We're going to get the Red Sticks,
We're going to get the Red Sticks,
So early in the morning."

It had begun to rain, but the men marched along singing cheerfully, despite the cold and hunger, as they splashed through the chilling spring rain. Only Wilson the scout did not join in the singing; he hung his head, ashamed to meet the eyes of his fellow soldiers, ashamed,—not because Old Hickory had forced him to remain, but because he had been the only man to show the white feather.

The army camped that night before the Horseshoe Bend. General Jackson spent half the night making

his plans for the battle. When he finished, he knew that the next day the last of the Creek Confederacy would be conquered.

"Philip," he said to the young man, who was sitting with him, "we've got 'em; they can't escape."

Before daylight General Coffee had orders to get half the army across the river, march to a position opposite the Bend, and recross, spreading his men along the bank of the Bend. The Indians had left a number of boats on the opposite bank. General Coffee sent a dozen men to swim across and get these boats. In a short time half the army was across the river, and by daylight General Coffee had obeyed orders, and the Horseshoe Bend was surrounded from the river side, which the warriors had not in the least expected. General Jackson ordered the remainder of the army to attack the log breastworks across the narrow neck of the Horseshoe.

Lieutenant Montgomery and the 39th regiment of regulars led the attack. Montgomery was the first man on the breastworks, and was killed instantly. Sam Houston thereupon took command and gained the breastworks, driving the Indians back. General Coffee attacked them from the rear, and the warriors found themselves completely surrounded by the enemy. They fought bravely and desperately, but they were outnumbered and at great disadvantage. A few escaped by swimming the river; but almost all the thousand warriors died, as Jackson had said, like rats in a trap,—a trap of their own setting.

As Red Eagle had prophesied to them, they saw too late the wisdom of his advice to make peace.

Old Man Jackson had come; the Creek Confederacy was ended.

After the battle Captain Arnold, going about among the wounded, doing what he could to relieve their suffering, came across Davy Crockett engaged in the same service.

"Seen Sam?" Davy asked anxiously.

"No. Was he wounded?"

"Twice Old Hickory saw he was hurt, and ordered him off the field; but he refused to go. I lost sight of him then."

Together the two searched for their young friend and found him,—groaning with pain and begging for water,—a dead Indian lying across his body.

When the surgeon, hurrying from one to another of the wounded, reached Sam, he shook his head and passed on to the next.

"Good as dead. No use wasting time on him."

"Good as dead!" groaned Sam. "I ain't dead. I ain't goin' to die. I'll be alive an' still fightin' twenty years after you're dead'n gone."

Arnold, who knew almost as much as the surgeon about dressing wounds, gave his attention to Sam and, with Davy's help, did what he could to relieve the boy's suffering. There were two balls in his shoulder, and a barbed arrow in his hip. All night they stayed with him, doing everything they could to ease the pain.

The next day Sam and the other wounded men were carried to the nearest settlement, where they could receive proper attention and more comforts.

"Good-bye, Captain! Good-bye, Davy!" young Sam said, as he lay on a wagon ready to start. "I'd 'a' died sure last night if it hadn't 'a' been for you two. I won't never forget."

For weeks the young fellow lay in bed, struggling for his life; and afterward, when he was well and fighting again, he would often say that the only thing that kept him alive was his determination to show that surgeon that he wasn't going to die.

CHAPTER XV

RED EAGLE'S SURRENDER

Chief Red Eagle stood at the door of his cabin in the woods. Grey Arrow, saddled and bridled and eager to be off, was near him. Chiaha was beside her husband, holding one of his strong hands in hers. A fat old squaw sat beside the door, with a sleeping baby in her arms.

Red Eagle had kept his word, and since his marvelous escape after the Holy Ground battle, had remained with Chiaha, fighting the white men no more. But now he was going on a journey from which he might not return.

"You will come back soon?" asked Chiaha anxiously.

"That I cannot tell, little one. I go to ask Old Man Jackson to help our women and children. Nearly all our warriors are dead; and those who are not have deserted the women and children, and fled to Pensacola."

"The white men may kill you. Why must you go?"

"It is right that I do what I can for the helpless ones," replied Red Eagle.

The girl did not argue.

"Then, if it is right, do it. The white man's God

saved you once. He will save you again." So had the little Indian maid put her trust in the white man's God.

"And if he does save me again," said Red Eagle, "I may go on a journey to the North,—to the Washington City."

"Oh! And then you will see my beautiful lady. Wait." Chiaha ran into the cabin, returning with her choicest beads and bracelets. "Give her these, and ask her if we may call the baby 'Felice,' for her. It is a pretty name."

She pressed Red Eagle's hand to her heart, then released it, smiling bravely. Her lips trembled; but she did not weep. The chief mounted his horse, waved his hand in farewell, and rode away into the woods. His black eyes were tender as he looked back at the slender figure in the doorway and at the sleeping babe in the old squaw's arms. He was bidding them a silent farewell. He did not expect to return to them.

General Jackson's camp was in excellent spirits. At last supplies had arrived in abundance,—meat and bread and enough rum for a good nip all around. It had not rained for three days, the weather was warm and balmy; the Creeks were practically exterminated, and the army would be going home soon. Truly they had cause to be in good spirits.

Captain Arnold, Sam Dale, and Davy Crockett sat on a fallen log, smoking their pipes and talking.

"I'll be gettin' back to Polly an' the little boys soon now," said Davy. "Polly'll be glad to see me.

When I left she was divided between laughin' and cryin', tellin' me to go, and beggin' me not to. I'm thinking there'll be another little chap to call me 'Dad' when I get back,—one I ain't seen yet—an' if there is, an' Polly ain't already named him, I'm minded to call him 'Sam Arnold,' after two good fightin' men I know."

"Suppose," suggested Dale, "he's a girl."

"Well, that bein' the case, I'll have to leave the namin' to Polly. I ain't got no gal's names."

"There'll be busy times for me in the guidin' business," said Sam, puffing away at his pipe. "The government'll get a lot of land from the Creeks when the treaty is made, an' folks will come swarmin' down here, wantin' to be shown the choicest places. It's amusin' the way each man confides in me that he expects me to take him to the very best spot in the territory. We can have some regular crops, too, without fear of trouble with the Indians. We're goin' to have a fine country here before long,—an' a new state to join the Union after a while; there ain't no better land anywhere than this territory. What you goin' to do now, Arnold?"

"I? Oh, I don't know. Fight as long as there is any fighting to do, and then perhaps I'll go to farming."

"Why don't you go North and use all that medical knowledge you've got? They say Philadelphia's a good place for a young feller to make a name an' future. You're wastin' a mighty good education down here in these wilds."

"An education is useful almost anywhere," replied Arnold. "Maybe I'll find plenty of use for my medical knowledge when all this territory is opened up for settlers. I wouldn't care for Philadelphia,—too many houses and people crowded together. As for living and working indoors,—I would suffocate. This life in the open, with plenty of breathing space and elbow room, suits me."

"Me too," agreed Dale. "But I was born to it. Seems like you was born to somethin' better. Say! Look!"

The other two men followed his astonished gaze.

In the very midst of the camp, on a cleared space in front of General Jackson's tent, stood a powerful grey horse, on his back an Indian chief in buckskin and feathers. Horse and rider were motionless as a statue, and had they dropped gently down from the sky, they could not have come more silently.

"It's the Red Stick chief," shouted a soldier. "Shoot him!"

A dozen rifles took aim, but the Indian did not move.

General Jackson, coming out of his tent, recognized the chief at a glance.

"Why are you here, Red Eagle?" he demanded sternly. "You, with the bloodstains of Fort Mimms on your hands!"

"I ask nothing for myself. Do with me as you will. But our women and children are starving and helpless in the woods. You believe yourselves to be better than the Redmen; prove it now, by doing what

they refuse to do! Protect the women and children."

"Shoot him!" again shouted the soldier, and the dozen rifles waited for the word from General Jackson. The word came, but not as they expected:

"No!" he thundered. "He is too brave a man. Dismount! You are my prisoner. Captain Arnold and Captain Dale, you will guard this prisoner."

The dozen rifles were lowered sullenly as the chief dismounted and entered the General's tent.

"We'll get him yet," muttered Wilson the scout. "My brother and his whole family were killed at Fort Mimms. There'll be one less Red Devil in this world when I get a chance at him."

Inside the tent General Jackson and the Creek chief discussed at some length the question of a treaty between the white men and the Indians. Then General Jackson sat thinking in silence for a while. Suddenly he turned to Captain Arnold, who was standing at the entrance of the tent.

"Captain Arnold, I want some instructions from the government at Washington about this treaty. I have written them several times, but they pay no heed to my letters. Here is one I have just written; I intended sending it by another messenger. You will start with it right after dark. Put the matter before the President and the War Department, and get them to do something. Keep at their heels until they act. Get Mr. Gerry, the Vice-President, to help you. He's an old man, but he's got lots of sense. Sam Dale will go with you as far as Savannah, and," he added significantly, "another soldier will go

with you as far as he likes. Sam, see if you can borrow some suitable clothes for a soldier to travel in."

Sam left the tent and returned in a little while,—a bundle of clothes under his arm.

"Where did you find them?" inquired Arnold. "I didn't know there was a stray garment in camp."

Dale chuckled.

"They weren't exactly stray. I borrowed 'em from Wilson. He'd had a bit too much of the new rum; never even murmured when I took 'em off and rolled him up in a blanket. When he wakes up he'll be so mad inside you can see the smoke pourin' out."

Red Eagle was a most meek and uncomfortable warrior in the tight trousers, the coat several sizes too small for him, and the felt hat pulled down over his ears. He reminded Arnold of a big dog sneaking off with his tail between his legs. He turned for a moment before he left the tent, to thank Jackson for his kindness.

"The Arrow," he added. "He is yours now."

General Jackson's face lighted appreciatively. "Ah, that is a fine gift! There isn't a better piece of horseflesh in the Territory."

"Nor a better judge," replied the chief. "I wouldn't trust the Arrow to any other man."

Jackson laid his hand affectionately on Arnold's shoulder, detaining him after the other two men were outside.

"Philip, my boy, one reason I am sending you

north is this: I want you to get married. You are old enough; it is time you were settled. A man's life is not complete without a wife. The best luck I can wish you is that you may find one half as good as mine."

"Thank you, sir, for the advice; but I am afraid I can't follow it. Good-bye, sir, until we meet again. You have been a good father to me."

"Good-bye, my son, good-bye."

When the young man was gone the General stood looking after him,—a misty, tender look in his black eyes.

"I'm an old fool," he said gruffly, brushing his eyes with his hand. "But I do love that boy. I'd give anything I own if he was my son."

The three men mounted their horses and rode away in the darkness. When they reached the pickets, Arnold produced his pass. The man on guard read:

"Pass Captain Arnold, Captain Dale, and one soldier.
"JACKSON."

"All right," said the sentry, returning the pass.

As the three men rode on, a man came running after them. The upper part of his body was bare and he had hastily fastened a blanket about his waist. It was Wilson the scout.

"Who was that?" he shouted to the picket.

"Captain Arnold, Captain Dale, and one soldier," was the answer.

"I thought so," Wilson replied; and raising his

rifle, he fired after the three men, aiming at the one in the middle. Lowering his gun he cursed angrily. "That soldier is the Red Devil chief. Old Hickory's lettin' him off. And he's got my clothes on,—an' I ain't got a garment to my back."

He returned to camp, cursing the picket, the Red Devil chief, Old Hickory, and the world in general. His bullet pierced the old felt hat on Red Eagle's head; the chief removed and examined the hat, then tossing it into the woods, rode calmly on.

At the small coast town of Savannah the three travelers arrived several days later, and put up at the tavern for breakfast. About the table they found several sailors,—eating, drinking and joking,—who greeted the newcomers noisily, and asked for the news. Sam Dale seemed to be well known and a great favorite wherever he went. When they were nearly through with their breakfast the door opened, and Captain Meyers, of the *Tiger Lily*, entered and was boisterously welcomed.

"Boat ahoy, skipper! Heave to for breakfast! Located any stray Jack-Tars yet?" and similar greetings were volleyed at him.

Captain Meyers grinned good-naturedly, taking a seat at the table, as he returned:

"Fair wind; fair day; fair sailing, if only I had another hand or two. Hello, Sam! Well, I am glad to see you. Where you been all winter? Haven't seen you in months. Lookin' for a bunch o' pioneers to pilot cross country to some spot in your God-forsaken territory?"

"Well, I'm always lookin' out for a job. Know of any?" replied Sam.

"I brought a bunch down from the eastern shore of Maryland last week,—three families of 'em. I reckon you'll find 'em 'round town somewheres."

"Much obliged, Captain; I'll look 'em up. Happen to be goin' North again soon? These two friends of mine are looking for some way to get there."

"Got a load of cotton aboard now," said the skipper; "jis' waitin' to start; but I'm short o' men." He eyed the two men thoughtfully. "If they wouldn't mind lendin' a hand now and then, I could take 'em, an' start this mornin'."

"That will just suit us," replied Arnold. "We're both strong and willing and anxious to get to Washington City as soon as we can."

"I'm bound for Baltimore. You can go on there, or land at Annapolis, an' ride across to the capital."

A few hours later the *Tiger Lily* crossed the sound and sailed out into the ocean, under a fair wind. The weather continued favorable, and the *Tiger Lily* made good time, keeping in as close to the coast as was safe.

"I hope we don't meet any British boats this trip," said Captain Meyers. "I've had two meetin's with 'em already. The first time we tried to fight, but didn't do no good. I got a bullet in my leg that bothers me yet. They took four o' my men, —one good sturdy Cape Cod American, a nigger, and two Spaniards. The last time, we had a lady aboard," the skipper continued, chuckling reminis-

cently; "an' she sure did bless that young captain. I bet he ain't got over blushin' yet. She's a queen all right! Then, just off Dauphin Island, Jean Lafitte an' his crew o' pirates got aboard, an' I reckon would 'a' carried us off,—boat, crew, an' all,—if he'd 'a' needed us. But when he see Miss Lee, he bowed an' scraped all over the deck, an' said all the treasure he wanted was to kiss her hand. An' bless my soul!—if she didn't let him kiss it; an' he went off 'thout takin' a thing. I'd have good luck, with her aboard all the time."

Captain Arnold listened eagerly when he heard Miss Lee's name mentioned.

"You carried Mr. Lee and his niece back to Washington on the *Tiger Lily?*" he inquired.

"Yes. Brought 'em down last summer, and took 'em back. She's as purty a gal as ever I see, an' sensible too. Know her?"

"Yes, very well. Tell me about your meeting with the British vessel when she was aboard," Arnold requested. And the skipper, who liked nothing better than the sound of his own voice, needed no urging. He found an interested listener, so long as he confined himself to the trip with Miss Lee aboard, but when he launched out on other adventures and experiences, his audience deserted, pacing the deck restlessly.

Late one afternoon Captain Meyers and Red Eagle, who had become good friends, were below exchanging yarns. Captain Arnold was pacing the deck. He felt a strange pleasure in being on the

same boat and walking the same deck where she had been only a few weeks before. As they neared Washington he was by turns hot and cold, eager and reluctant; his spirits rose and fell. At any rate, the unspeakable longing to see her again would be satisfied. He would look once, then come away content.

"Captain Arnold," the mate called; "will you tell Captain Meyers there's a ship anchored ahead. She's lowered a boat, and is signaling us to heave to."

Captain Meyers came on deck at this news.

"Heave to!" he ordered. "We'll see what she wants."

The boat, rowed by a score of stalwart men, approached rapidly.

"Boat ahoy!" cried the skipper.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the answer. "A boat from his Majesty's ship the *Surprise*."

Captain Meyers swore roundly.

"It's the same crew that stopped us last time, an' we ain't got a lady aboard this time."

The boat came alongside, and a dozen British marines, armed with muskets, clambered aboard,—a dark-eyed, handsome youth in uniform at their head.

The young man grinned as he caught sight of the skipper.

"Ah, captain, we meet once again! Have you on board this time——"

"No; the Queen ain't aboard this time. Do your worst."

The young man smiled a little sheepishly.

"Then, muster your crew on deck."

Captain Meyers obeyed sullenly, and the crew appeared on deck. The British captain picked a negro from among them.

"Lawdy Gawd! Ah ain't no Britisher. Doan' yo' see Ah's black as tah?"

"Take him along," ordered the young naval officer.

The negro sent back a parting shot as the marines pulled him over the side of the boat.

"De onlies' 'semblance 'tween me an' de British is our color. Ah's black on de outsides, an dey's black on de insides."

Captain Carlisle, of the British Navy, smiled and turned his attention to the two men standing beside Captain Meyers. Red Eagle, of course, was out of the question,—by no possible stretch of the imagination could he be called a Briton,—but the other——

"You are English?" he asked of Arnold.

"No; I am an American,—a soldier serving in the army."

"But you were born in England," declared Captain Carlisle. "Bring him along! Four men below to search for contraband articles!" he ordered.

Captain Arnold protested vigorously against this outrage, and the Indian chief and the skipper joined in, standing ready to fight, if necessary. But Captain Carlisle turned away, paying no heed to their words. Arnold did some rapid thinking. It was useless for them to fight; they were outnumbered two to one, not to speak of the British on board the *Sur-*

prise. For himself, he would rather die at once than serve one hour on board a British vessel. But he did not want Captain Meyers and Red Eagle to be killed in a useless fight. It would be best to go quietly, and trust to luck for some means of escape. Then the thought came to him suddenly, that he had already, folded in his bosom, a means of escape.

"Captain Carlisle," he called. The young Captain turned to listen.

Arnold spoke steadily, but his cheeks burned, and he knew it would be easier to face death than the thing he was going to do.

"My name is Philip Arnold. I am serving to the best of my ability the country to which the name of Arnold owes a debt it can never pay." He took from his coat a yellowed parchment, which he handed to Captain Carlisle. "Here is my birth certificate."

The young officer glanced at the paper inquiringly; then amazement spread over his face. When he had read the paper and handed it back, he said scornfully:

"No one despised the traitor more than the nation that bought him. Very well; stay where you are. We don't want you. Come on, boys; let him alone! Perhaps, like his father, he may be of more service to us where he is."

Fury mastered Arnold, and, like a flash, he drew his sword, crying:

"On guard!" But Captain Carlisle with one glance at the face, white with rage, turned and climbed over the side of the boat.

"No," he replied insolently, "I fight only with gentlemen's sons."

Arnold drew his pistol, and, in his fury, would have fired but for the skipper's restraining hand on his arm.

As Arnold stood silently watching the boat as it moved toward the *Surprise* the skipper touched his arm sympathetically.

"Ain't it the devil to hold in when you're jis bustin' to let loose? But we all have it to do sometimes. Maybe you'll meet him again,—when the advantage won't be all on his side."

CHAPTER XVI

AT THE CAPITAL

Up the Chesapeake Bay,—past the James River, the York, the Rappahannock, and the broad mouth of the Potomac,—sailed the *Tiger Lily*. At Annapolis she landed her two crew-passengers.

"It's nearer this way, but you'll find the Baltimore road better," suggested the skipper. Arnold decided on the nearer way.

"I reckon I'll happen back here 'long about Saturday or Sunday, if you want to make the trip back with me. I'll wager drinks all 'round that our friend, the chief, will have his fill of civilization by that time, an' be longin' fur his native woods. I dunno 'bout Captain Arnold; he looks like he might be somethin' of a ladies' man, an' I reckon he can hold his own with the best o' the beaux, if he takes a notion," was Captain Meyers' comment.

A little later, having bidden farewell to the kind-hearted skipper, Arnold and the Red Eagle rode along the Severn, past St. John's College, where the boys were playing ball under the great trees on the lawn, on toward the Federal City. The road ran through a level, pleasing country, amid leafy woods and brown fields where the young corn was just com-

ing up. Here and there the road crossed a clear little stream bordered with shady trees. Overhead the day was perfect, but underfoot the way was abominable. The road, poor at best, was like a bog from the spring rains, and the horses had difficulty in getting through the mire, knee-deep in places.

The spring in the air, the smell of the moist earth, the songs of the birds, the sweet fragrance of wild flowers,—all these touched the chords of eternal youth in the two men, who, after the two long weeks on the water, were like birds freed from a cage. Red Eagle, undemonstrative always, did not respond audibly; but his black eyes gleamed with appreciation, and he drank in draughts, long and deep, of the fresh spring air.

Arnold, on the other hand, was like a boy out of school,—splashing recklessly through the mud, singing snatches of song, whistling to the birds, and in his young heart hope and joy were singing over and over, "I shall see her again! I shall see her again!"

When they reached the eastern branch of the Potomac, they were two men with but a single thought. Neither voiced the thought of the other; but, with one accord, they dismounted and tied their horses. A moment later, two bodies,—one gleaming white in the sun, the other like burnished copper,—dove from the bank into the deep, chilly water. They came from the water, with bodies glowing and pulses quickened, dressed, mounted, and continued on their way.

At four o'clock they rode into Bladensburg, and

stopped for dinner. Soon they were on their way again, and at sundown were resting their horses on Capitol Hill, surveying the city spread out before them,—"The City of Magnificent Distances." A mile and a half away, down a broad avenue lined with Lombardy poplars, the President's house gleamed spotless in the sunset glow; in the distance beyond were the hills of Georgetown. From the foot of the grass-covered Capitol Hill a wide plain stretched out to the Potomac, and through this plain, among splendid forest trees, the little silvery Tiber wound its way. Captain Arnold felt a thrill of pride as he noted the magnificent site of his country's capital, and looking into the future, as every patriotic American did, he saw there a great city of splendid buildings, magnificent homes, broad, handsome avenues, peopled with noble men and lovely women. Red Eagle expressed his approval: "It is good," he said gravely, "and still breathing space."

They rode down the broad avenue, between the poplars, and stopped at the Inn. It seemed a quiet, pleasant place, after the rough taverns of the coast towns. The landlord, in white jacket, looked after the comfort of each guest; maids in white caps and aprons moved noiselessly across the sanded floor; there was a barred tap in one corner, and seated about were gentlemen,—many of them grave-eyed statesmen, discussing the affairs of state in low voices, the main subject of interest being the war with England.

The landlord led the new arrivals to a table in the

corner, where a young man,—a Frenchman,—sat alone, leisurely sipping his wine.

"Be seated, gentlemen, and honor me with your company," he invited cordially. "My name is de Journet,—André de Journet,—late aide to His Imperial Majesty, Napoleon I, of France. Bring glasses, landlord. Shall we drink to His Majesty's health, and to His Excellency your President, and to you, Monsieur le chef, and to you, Monsieur le capitaine? And now, to the success of the cause that brings me to America! Ah,"—the young Frenchman laughed as Arnold hesitated,—"Monsieur need not fear. It is not an affair of state, it is—of the heart."

So the three drank to the success of the cause that had brought M. André de Journet to America. The young Frenchman was an agreeable companion; he pointed out to the newcomers the men of prominence, and told them interesting personal stories of the Great Napoleon.

A tall young man at a near-by table he pointed out as Mr. Henry Clay, who was soon to leave for Europe, to negotiate a treaty with England. When he rose, de Journet called to him in a friendly way:

"Monsieur Clay, here are two gentlemen from the South with news of your Indian war down there."

Mr. Clay joined them, and talked with them for some time, showing much interest in the affairs of the Territory. Arnold found him very likeable. He admired the man's easy, deferential manners, his honest, flashing blue eyes, and musical voice,—mu-

sical, that is to say, until he spoke on the subject that was absorbing his time and interest: the war with England.

"It's an outrage!" he said bitterly when Arnold told of their experience with the British ship. "They've taken hundreds of our good American citizens, and are forcing them to work on their vessels. And we seem powerless to avenge this wrong."

When Clay rose to leave, he said he would call for Arnold and Red Eagle the next morning and escort them to the President's House, so that they might deliver their messages to Mr. Madison.

M. de Journet continued to entertain them for a time with stories of Napoleon and his conquests,—a subject of which he never seemed to tire,—and Arnold was interested to hear of the great man from one who knew him so intimately. The young Frenchman was in the midst of a thrilling story of the battle of Austerlitz, where Napoleon had been so victorious over the Austrian army, when a servant handed him a note. For a moment, as de Journet held it to the light, the address was plainly in Arnold's line of vision: "M. de Journet," in small, delicate handwriting, which he recognized at once. Felice had written to him one letter while she was in Mobile, and he had carried it next his heart day and night since.

His heart beat rapidly at once more seeing the beloved writing.

M. de Journet read the note, then rose from his chair.

"I must go, gentlemen. You will excuse me. The ladies are changeable. I think my mission prospers." He seemed greatly pleased with the note. "I thank you for a pleasant time in your company. Good-night, gentlemen. I trust we meet again tomorrow."

When he was gone Arnold sat for some time in silence, gazing thoughtfully before him, wondering what was in that note and what M. de Journet's mission had to do with Miss Felice Lee.

"A pleasant young fellow," Red Eagle said.

"Yes," Arnold replied; "pleasant enough. But I wouldn't want to trust him far. I don't like his eyes. They aren't quite honest."

The next morning Mr. Clay came, as he had promised, to escort them to the President's House.

Mr. Clay seemed to be a privileged visitor at the House; the servants saluted him respectfully, and let him pass without question. He led the two strangers up the broad stone steps, through the wide hall, and upstairs to a small room, which was Mr. Madison's own private office. They found him engaged in conversation with Mr. Armstrong, his War Secretary, and Mr. Gerry, the Vice-President. He greeted Mr. Clay cordially.

"Ah, Henry, come in! I am glad to see you. Captain Arnold and Chief Red Eagle." He welcomed the two men warmly as Mr. Clay introduced them. "I am pleased to meet you, gentlemen. Be seated. You come from the South?"

Arnold went at once to the object of his visit,

telling briefly of the defeat of the Creeks and of General Jackson's desire to close a treaty with them immediately. When he finished speaking the President looked inquiringly at the War Secretary, and that gentleman looked inquiringly at the President, each waiting for the other to speak.

"Ah,—I see. I see," said Mr. Madison. "Ah, General Armstrong, what do you think?"

"We might bring the matter before the cabinet meeting next Monday, and discuss it fully then," General Armstrong replied.

"Yes; perhaps that will be best," acquiesced Mr. Madison.

"But, Mr. President," suggested Arnold, "General Jackson has waited already some weeks to hear from you. It is of the utmost importance that this treaty be made at once. Could you not leave the matter entirely in General Jackson's hands? He understands the situation perfectly; the Creeks respect and fear him, the settlers have confidence in him. I believe he is quite capable of making a treaty satisfactory to both parties."

"That seems a good suggestion," said Mr. Madison. "Henry, what do you say?"

"That Captain Arnold is quite right. Leave the matter to General Jackson to settle," replied Mr. Clay.

General Armstrong disagreed emphatically.

"It would not do at all,—not at all! A mere officer of the militia to make a treaty in the name of the United States Government! Preposterous!"

Mr. Gerry had been listening and watching the speakers with his bright, penetrating eyes. He was an old man, but his faculties were still alert, and his judgment excellent. He spoke now,—a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"General Armstrong, doesn't it occur to you that a mere officer of the militia, who is on the ground, has fought the battles, has conquered the enemy, and knows the situation thoroughly, may be better able to negotiate a treaty with them, than is the Secretary of War, who doesn't know the first thing about that war nor the conditions down there?"

"Perhaps so; perhaps so," the War Secretary replied, with offended dignity.

"Here are two men," replied Mr. Gerry, "representing the two contending parties. Captain Arnold has already spoken for the white people. Sir, what have you to say for the Creek Confederacy?"

"My people," said Red Eagle, "have confidence in General Jackson. They are willing to treat with him."

"You see?" continued Mr. Gerry conclusively. "Let General Jackson make the treaty. It seems to me we have our hands full trying to treat with England. I, for one, am glad there is a man in the South capable of attending to affairs down there."

Mr. Gerry had much influence with the President, who had great confidence in his judgment.

"I believe you are right, Mr. Gerry, and I will dispatch a messenger immediately, giving General Jackson full authority to treat with the Creeks.

Captain Arnold, can you give me definite instructions as to where General Jackson can be found?"

Captain Arnold gave the necessary information.

"Mr. President," he continued, "may I make a suggestion to you? I trust you will not think me presumptuous for offering it."

"Not at all, sir. What is the suggestion?"

"A promotion for General Jackson. You need him in the regular army. He is a born military leader. He practices law in Nashville, but I think he knows more of military law than of civil. He has a remarkable understanding of the tactics of war, and a marvelous control of men. He belongs in the army. I trust you will not forget him."

"You are right, Captain," said Mr. Clay. "We need more such men in the army. I would suggest that you make him a Major-General, Mr. President, with command in the South."

Perhaps had Mr. Clay known that some time later this man was to defeat him for President of the United States, he might not have spoken this good word for him.

A month later Andrew Jackson received his commission as Major-General in the regular army, with command in the South.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Madison, rising, "will you come with me to meet my wife? She will be glad to see you. And also her cousin, Miss Lee, who, with her uncle, was in the South for some months. Probably you met them."

Arnold accepted the invitation eagerly,—his heart pounding madly in his breast.

Mr. Clay, General Armstrong, and Mr. Gerry remained in the office, discussing the treaty with England, to negotiate which Mr. Clay was to leave in a few days.

Mr. Madison led the way down the broad hallway to his wife's cheerful sitting-room. At the open door he paused, listening. Arnold and Red Eagle stood behind him. Someone was reading aloud a brilliant ballad by Mr. Scott, and Arnold recognized the sweet voice, to him the sweetest voice in all the world.

"Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the West,—
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best,
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,—
He rode all unarm'd and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was Knight like the young Lochinvar.

. . . . . .

"So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a gaillard did grace,
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume,
And the bridemaidens whisper'd, ''Twere better by far
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

"One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! We are gone! Over bank, brush and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar."

The girl sat in a high-back, chintz-covered chair. Arnold gazed eagerly at her. Her listeners were

Mrs. Madison, who sat in a low chair, sewing; a middle-aged gentleman before an easel, painting, and Mr. Payne Todd, lounging near on a chintz-covered couch.

When Felice finished reading, Mr. Madison applauded loudly from the doorway.

"Very good, very good! Well written, and very well read! I hear Mr. Scott has written a new poem,—'The Lady of the Lake.' We must get it. Dolly, my dear, this is Captain Arnold and Chief Red Eagle. Miss Lee, our son Mr. Todd, and Mr. Gilbert Stuart."

Felice had risen and stood beside her chair, clutching at the back for support. Philip went straight to her, taking her hands in his. Mr. Payne Todd rose from the couch, cursing inwardly at sight of the young man, who had already interfered so greatly with his happiness.

"You—you—are alive?" the girl asked in a whisper. "You are alive?"

"Very much alive, indeed. And why not? Do I look like a ghost?"

At the touch of his kiss on her hand, the color came back to Felice's cheek, and, controlling herself, she greeted Red Eagle.

"And how is my little Chiaha?"

"Well and happy. She sends you these small gifts, with her love, and asks your permission to give the little one your name."

"Tell her I thank her most sincerely for the gifts, and for the honor of giving the little one my name."

She then slipped from her neck a piece of velvet with the little gold-barred blue locket set with pearls, having the word, "Felice," carved on the back. "Give the little one this from me, and tell her the best wish I can send her is that she may be as sweet and beautiful as her mother, and as brave and noble as her father."

She turned again to speak to Captain Arnold, and her eyes met Payne's, fixed on her in anxious dread. In them she read the boy's guilt, and in hers the boy read his fate. Slipping quietly from the room, and finding his friend Dan Webster waiting below, the two departed for the Inn, where Payne sought to drown his sorrow in the cup.

"Captain Arnold," said the gentleman introduced as Mr. Gilbert Stuart, "be so kind as to give me your opinion of this portrait. The family are pleased with it, but I should like the candid opinion of a stranger."

Arnold was astonished at the remarkable likeness of the girl on the canvas to the girl standing near. The waving, golden-brown hair, the rosebud mouth just blossoming into a smile, the exquisite coloring of the cheeks were all Felice's; but the eyes pleased him most, for in their dark, limpid depths he caught a softness, a sweet sadness, which he had never seen in them before. "Perhaps," he thought, and his heart leaped joyfully, "perhaps she, too, has suffered even as I have." The next moment his spirits sank again to the very depths.

"The portrait," Mr. Stuart was saying, uncon-

scious of the suffering his words would cause, "I am painting for Mrs. Madison, as a wedding gift for her son, who is to marry Miss Lee next week. I have painted many subjects in my day,—noble men, and beautiful women,—but I consider this the only perfect portrait I have ever made, due largely to the fact that Miss Lee is a perfect model."

Arnold went to Felice and sat beside her on the couch, asking after Judy and Mr. Lee, who was away in Baltimore; and she, in turn, inquired about the people she knew in the South.

"Tell me," he asked suddenly, "why were you so surprised to see me alive?"

"We heard before we left Mobile that you were killed in a fight with Indians."

"Ah, I see. And you are sorry to have me turn up again, alive and well, after I was once safely dead and buried?"

"No," she answered, softly,—so low that he could scarce hear the words,—"I am glad—glad—glad!"

CHAPTER XVII

PAYNE REPENTS,—AND SINS AGAIN

Later in the afternoon, when the guests had departed and Mrs. Madison was below entertaining visitors, Felice sat alone in the high-back arm-chair in Cousin Dolly's sitting room. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright, and a smile played softly about her mouth as she dreamed. But her thoughts were not of her wedding, which was set for the following week, nor of the beautiful trousseau so carefully planned by Cousin Dolly, nor, least of all, was she thinking of the bridegroom.

She was quite unaware of that young man's presence in the doorway, where he stood for some time, watching her in silence. Never before had she seemed more beautiful and more desirable.

"Felice," he said, advancing to her side.

She did not look at him, but sat staring before her. The smile had disappeared now and an angry light shone in her eyes.

"Felice, won't you forgive me? It was because of my great love. I knew, as long as the other man lived, you would love him; but I thought if he were dead,—in your mind, at least,—you would love me again, as you did before."

"I do not know, Payne, whether I will ever forgive you or not. Perhaps, some day. There is only one thing for you to do."

"I am willing to do anything to regain your respect."

"Then write to Captain Arnold, or go to him, and tell him what you have done. Tell him that you and I are no longer betrothed."

"Felice, you can't mean that? With the wedding set for next week, and everything ready! Think of mother!—it will kill her. And of me. I can't live without you!"

"I shall think of no one but myself, as you have thought only of yourself. I can never marry you; nothing can make me even consider it."

"But, Felice——"

The girl rose imperiously, her eyes flashing with the angry light in them.

"It is useless to argue. Unless you wish me to go on hating you as I do at this moment, go there and write." She pointed to the secretary in the corner.

Payne hesitated a moment; then, crushed by the look of scorn and anger in her eyes, he walked slowly to the secretary, took up the pen, wrote a few words, and sanded and folded the paper. Again he hesitated a moment, then handed the note to Felice.

"It is my death warrant!" he said.

"I am sorry, Payne," she replied, softened by his dejection; "but it is your own fault. And I

have suffered,—only God knows how you have made me suffer the past weeks,—by your deception."

"Won't you reconsider, Felice? Think what it means to me. You are driving me to my ruin."

"That is nonsense, Payne. You should be man enough, for your mother's sake, to make something of yourself. You will break her heart if you go back to your old habits."

"Then marry me," he begged, "and save me from them."

"No, Payne; I cannot."

"That is final?"

"Yes, it is final."

"Then,—good-bye." He kissed her hand passionately. "You are right, Felice; I am not worthy of you."

The next afternoon Captain Arnold sat at a table at the Inn—a glass of ale, forgotten, at his elbow. He had just bade farewell to Red Eagle, who, already tired of civilization and longing for his native woods, had gone to Annapolis to meet Captain Meyers and return with him on the *Tiger Lily*.

Arnold was half-minded to accompany the Indian, but the words Felice had spoken, "I am glad—glad—glad!" held him like fetters of iron. He felt it was best for him to go, without seeing her again, —the following week she would be the bride of Mr. Payne Todd,—yet he could not leave with those words echoing in his ears.

A negro servant entered the Inn, inquired for Captain Arnold, and delivered to him two notes:

one from Mrs. Madison, inviting him to her drawing-room that evening; the other in the bold, flourishing writing of a man, and signed, "Most respectfully yours, P. Todd."

The note was short, and he read it through twice, then sat staring at the words as though unable to comprehend their meaning. After several minutes, the negro coughed respectfully to attract his attention.

"Pleas', suh, ef dey ain't no ansuh, Ah'll be gwine 'long back. We's consideble busy dis day, 'count er de pahty, en' Marse Payne gwine 'way so sudden-like."

"On account of what?" asked Arnold.

"'Count er Marse Payne. He gwine cross de ocean wid Marse Henry Clay. 'Tain't nobody knows why,—en' his weddin'-day nex' week. Mis' Dolly, she pow'ful cut up 'bout hit, cryin' a heap, but Ah hears er tell Marse Jeems dat Miss Felice done right, an' hit wuh bes' foh Marse Payne go 'way."

"You may go. There is no answer."

Arnold handed him a dollar; the negro thanked him gratefully and bowed himself out.

For some time the young man sat, staring at the note in his hand, his heart singing joyfully in his breast. Then he called for pen and ink, and sent a negro boy to the one small greenhouse which Washington City boasted, for a bouquet of pink roses. When the boy returned with the roses, fastened tightly together with a ruffle of filmy pink

lace, Arnold had finished his note, and giving it to him, told him to carry them both to Miss Felice Lee at the President's House. Impatiently he waited for a reply; every minute the boy was gone seemed an hour.

When the negro arrived at the President's House, Mr. Payne Todd was pacing dejectedly up and down the broad verandah.

"Pleas', suh, heah am somepin' foh Miss Felice Lee."

"Who from?" asked Payne, without interest.

"A gemmins what am stayin' at de Inn, suh, by de name of Marse Arnol'."

Payne eyed the note and the flowers jealously.

"Give them to me, and wait for the answer." He carried the flowers and the note to his own chamber; he hesitated a moment; then, shrugging his shoulders, opened the note and read. A wave of intense jealousy swept over him. In a bowl on his table was a bouquet of roses, which he had ordered from Philadelphia for his betrothed to wear to the drawing-room that night. They were exactly similar to the ones in his hand, except in color, being a lovely yellow surrounded by delicate yellow lace. A sudden thought struck him.

Throwing Arnold's bouquet into a corner, he rang for a servant, and sent the yellow roses and the note to Felice.

That young lady, in her loose, pink-flowered dressing gown, was lounging in a comfortable chair, while Judy brushed her hair; her cheeks were flushed,

and on her face was an expression of eager expectancy.

"Foh de Lawd's sake, Missy, cain't yo' keep yo'self still whiles Ah brush yo' ha'r? Yo's es fidg'ty es a hoss in fly time. Yo' jump mos' outen yo' skin ebry time yo' heahs a soun'. Dare now, somebody's knockin' at de do'! Jes' yo' sit still whiles Ah sees who dat is." She returned, bearing the note and the yellow roses.

"Ain't dem jes' de purties' what yo' eber see'd?"

But Felice, paying no heed to the roses, snatched the note, and read the address eagerly, pausing long enough to kiss the well-known writing before she read the words:

"Miss Felice Lee.

Dear Madam: I have just received a communication from Mr. Todd, in which he states that you and he are no longer betrothed. If this is true, and if you still love me, will you marry me now? But before you answer, I must tell you something which I have not told you before, but which I have felt all along you must know before you give me a definite answer. I have not an honorable name to offer you; it is probably the most dishonored and despised name in the States. I am the son of that Arnold who betrayed his country. Just before his death I promised him to serve my country with my life and to put honor and duty before everything else. That is why I could not take you from the man to whom you were betrothed, without that man's consent. If you love me, and can accept the disgrace that my name carries with it, wear my roses to-night at the drawing-room."

When Felice finished reading, she took the roses from Judy, and buryin' her face in them, sobbed in her joy.

"Foh de Lawd's sakes, Missy, doan take on so! Is yo' gwine plum daffy?"

"I think so, Judy. I am so happy!" answered the girl, between sobs and laughter. Taking the quaintly carved silver bracelet from her arm, she wrapped it up carefully in her kerchief.

"He said, if I ever wanted him, to send him this," she thought. "This is the answer, Judy. Give it to the servant."

Mr. Todd, waiting below, took the answer from the servant, and, going into his chamber, dropped it into his box, where the little bracelet remained for many months, traveling about in Europe with him, from one place to another. Then sauntering out on the verandah where the negro boy sat whistling and waiting, he slipped a coin in his hand.

"There isn't any answer, but tell the young man the lady was exceedingly glad to receive that bouquet."

"Yes, suh."

Returning, the boy said to the impatient Arnold:

"Ain't no ansuh, but de lady pow'ful glad ter git dat bokay."

And Captain Arnold, with joy in his heart, started out to find suitable clothing in which to appear that night at Mrs. Madison's drawing-room.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DRAWING-ROOM

Felice was in a state of joyful excitement and had much difficulty in deciding what to wear that evening. There were two new dresses just home from the dressmakers,—one, a lovely silver tissue with gems and spangles, the other, a filmy pink tulle bordered with silver flowers and buds. She rather favored the pink tulle, but the yellow roses would look better with the other. A dozen times she changed her mind, and in the end decided on a buff-colored satin, not so new as the other two, but vastly becoming.

She flitted about the room while Judy was dressing her, singing joyfully one minute, the next smiling dreamily to herself, until Judy's patience was in a fair way of being exhausted.

"Foh de good Lawd's sake, Missy, how yo' spec's Ah gwine fix yo' ha'r, wid yo' doin' de Verginny Reel all obah de room? Ef yo' doan quit kissin' dem yallah roses, dey ain' gwine be fitten to w'ar."

"I'll be good, Judy, if you will only hurry. You are so slow."

"Ah reckons Ah knows why yo' am so frustrated, —'ca'se Marse Cap'n Arnol' done come ter town.

Ef he doan ketch en' hol' yo' dis time, Ah's gwine be mighty diserpinted."

When the girl was dressed in the buff-colored Empire gown with rich Mechlin lace about the bodice,—her bare neck and throat gleaming like ivory satin above the bouquet of roses on her bosom, and a gorgeous yellow Bird of Paradise in her hair, —she was like some beautiful golden bird. And she was so radiantly happy! It seemed to her as if she were standing at the gate of an earthly paradise, ready to enter.

The door opened, and Barbara flew into the room, —a little wild rose, in a white Scotch mull broidered in pink rosebuds. She paused and gazed in open-eyed wonder at the golden vision before her.

"Felice!" she cried. "You are indescribably beautiful to-night! Your face! Judy, what have you done to her?"

Felice laughed, kissing her.

"It is because I am so happy, Barbara. Come; let us go down."

When the two girls reached the foot of the broad white stairway several young gallants in gay satin breeches and coats, silken hose, silver-buckled shoes, and lace ruffles, hurried forward to meet them,— among them Mr. Bushrod Hunter, who claimed Barbara's hand and carried her away to a corner; Mr. Washington Irving, brilliant and handsome and beloved of everybody (gossip marked him as one of Miss Lee's rejected suitors; but whether or not this was true, they were very good friends); M. de

Journet, unusually handsome and gallant, and several others.

Felice gave her hand to the young Frenchman; perhaps because she had not been very kind to him, —only once had she permitted him to see her alone (it was the night he had received her note at the Inn); and then, just as he was leading up to the point where he could tell her of his mission to America, her uncle came in and stayed with them the rest of the evening. So now, being very happy herself, and wanting to please every one, she gave him her hand.

"Mademoiselle would do honor to a throne," he whispered, as he bent over her hand. "You are like the glorious golden sun, and the others pale, like stars, beside you." He led her into the great East Room, where all Washington was gathered in response to the invitation of the popular mistress of the White House: the ladies in shimmering satins, and laces, and nodding plumes; the older men in somber black; the young bloods in the gayest of satin breeches and coats. The drawing-room, with high windows and walls set with great mirrors, was hung with yellow damask, and the high-back chairs and sofas were upholstered in brocade of the same color. Hundreds of candles, in sconces and candelabra about the room, brightened the gay scene.

Mr. Madison,—a small, tired-looking man in somber black,—was quite overshadowed by his rather buxom wife, in a white satin dress and Paris

turban with waving white plumes. She was in high spirits, and greeted each guest with friendly cordiality. Mrs. Madison was quite the most popular lady in the city, and everybody loved her, because she loved everybody.

Mr. Madison's face brightened when he saw Felice; he was very fond of his wife's little cousin, and though he said little, was greatly disappointed that they were not to have her in the family as a daughter-in-law.

"Good-evening, my dear," said he. "You are looking well,—unusually handsome, even for you."

"Thank you, Cousin Madison; but you,—I cannot say the same for you," she replied. "You look bored and tired to death. Why don't you slip upstairs, with two or three congenial spirits, and enjoy a pleasant evening? Cousin Dolly is quite capable of handling this crush alone."

"Yes, I know she is; but it seems like shirking my duty to run away. Perhaps a little later I shall follow your advice."

Felice scanned the crowd eagerly for the one she longed to see, but he was not there.

"He *might* have come early," she thought, a little crossly, "if he is as anxious to see me as I am to see him."

The young men crowded about her with their dance cards, and even some of the older men begged for her company, for she was always the belle wherever she appeared. The young men vied with each other for her favor, and the older men found her

ready wit and brilliant conversation most entertaining.

But now she smilingly denied them all, and still favoring the young Frenchman, sat with him on a sofa near the door, waiting and watching.

M. de Journet whispered gallant words in her ear, but she scarcely heard them; her eyes watched the entrance eagerly.

"Mademoiselle does not realize how beautiful she is. Her face reminds me to-night of the sunshine, and blooming flowers, and singing birds, and—eternal happiness. She is more exquisite even than the lovely roses in her bosom. Will you give me one of them?"

Abstractedly, she drew one of the roses from the bouquet, and handed it to him. He kissed first her hand and then the rose. Just at that moment Captain Arnold appeared in the door. The first sight that met his eager glance was the little scene on the sofa. In a flash he realized three things: that the roses she wore were yellow, that his bracelet was gone from her arm, that she was the most radiantly beautiful creature he had ever seen.

His first impulse was to turn and flee, but his pride came to his rescue, and, with a low bow, he passed on to pay his respects to Mrs. Madison and the President. He attracted considerable attention, and many a pair of pretty eyes gazed admiringly upon the handsome, broad-shouldered young stranger, with the bearing of a soldier and the manners of a chevalier. He was dressed in a plain

black-velvet suit, enriched with elegant lace ruffles; his shapely limbs were encased in black silken hose and on his feet were silver-buckled shoes. Felice, who had seen him only in his rough hunting apparel, was amazed at his handsome, distinguished appearance. The girl was puzzled by his coolness. "He did not want to interrupt M. de Journet," she thought; "he will come to me later." But there had been no joyful understanding love-light in his eyes when he had seen his flowers on her bosom. She did not understand, but she waited eagerly for him to come. Mr. Madison introduced him to several of the young men standing about, among them Mr. Francis Key.

"Mr. Key, will you take Captain Arnold in hand and see that he meets the young ladies and has a pleasant evening?"

Mr. Key was a small man, with a slender, intellectual face, and the unmistakable mark of a student. He smiled affably, and Arnold felt that he was going to like him.

"Will you cast your eye about and select the particular young ladies you desire to meet, or shall I begin at the beginning and please them all?"

"Thank you, sir, I do not dance, so I fear the ladies will not care to bother with me. Shall we sit here and talk?"

"That will please me, as I do not dance either. But I'm thinking, judging by the anxious looks cast in your direction, there will be some disappointed hearts among the fair sex."

"You are a lawyer, I would judge," said Arnold when they were seated in a corner.

"Yes," the other laughed. "We lawyers seem to go well labeled. I live in Georgetown."

Mr. Key was really a most interesting conversationalist, but Arnold found his attention wandering to the corner where Felice still sat with M. de Journet. Jealousy, anger, despair raged in his heart. The girl waited impatiently for him to come to her.

"Perhaps," she thought at length, "he will not come until I am alone." So, on pretext of wanting her jeweled fan, which she had left at the other end of the room, she sent M. de Journet to fetch it. Her eyes met Arnold's as she sat alone on the sofa and she smiled invitingly. To her utter amazement he turned away and continued in conversation with Mr. Key.

Felice's cheeks flushed angrily, and then paled. She was bewildered. Whatever the cause, he had deliberately refused her invitation to come to her.

Pride and anger raged in her heart. She was terribly hurt; and when a proud woman is hurt she would rather die than expose the wound to the gaze of others; most of all does she hide it from the one who has inflicted the hurt. She would show Captain Arnold she did not care; he should feel that he was nothing to her. When M. de Journet returned with her fan she rose, gave him her hand, and joining the gay crowd of young folks, she danced and chatted and laughed and coquetted like a heartless butterfly. Nor did any one who saw her, or smiled at

her youthful radiance and beauty, realize that her heart was almost breaking. Arnold tried to give his attention to his companion, tried to dismiss Felice from his mind and life; but no matter how hard he tried, he was conscious all the time of the golden butterfly, fluttering about from one partner to another, gay, care-free, joyous.

Mr. Key, all unconscious of the struggle going on in the heart of the young man beside him, talked on.

"What do you think of our city, Captain Arnold, or rather, our prospective city?"

"I am charmed with the location and surroundings. In time it will be a city of which we may all be justly proud."

"But at present," laughed Mr. Key, "it is mainly magnificent distances, forest trees, bogs, muddy streets, and a few,—a very few,—good buildings."

Mr. Madison passed, with Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, on his way to take Felice's advice and retire for a pleasant time with his two friends.

"And our President," continued Mr. Key,—"what do you think of him? This is the first time you have seen him?"

"Yes; and judging from so short an acquaintance, I find him a splendid man, honest and conscientious, but with a task rather too large for his shoulders. A good statesman, but a poor general."

"You have estimated him correctly. I have never known a man more anxious to do his duty; and in

time of peace he is an excellent executive. But this war with England is almost too much for him."

"What is the situation now?" asked Arnold.

"Much the same. The British ships continue to interfere with our foreign trade, and they are constantly impressing our men into service on their vessels. There has been some talk of a British army landing on the coast, but so far none has arrived. Tell me about this General Jackson who has been doing things in the South."

"Imagine the exact opposite of Mr. Madison, and you have a picture of General Jackson,—a born general, but no statesman."

The young men requested Felice to sing. So M. de Journet led her to the piano, and as final proof to Captain Arnold that he was nothing to her, she began to sing gayly:

"Of a' the airts the winds can blaw,
I dearly like the West,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best"—

The memories of that day,—his day,—the most sacred day in all his life, came rushing like a flood upon him; it seemed to him she was mocking his love, and exposing his sacred day to the curious and desecrating eyes of this crowd. When she finished singing she took the roses from her bosom, and laughingly threw them, one by one, to the crowd of beaux, who scrambled madly to capture them. One fell in front of Philip, and his foot crushed it as he stumbled blindly from the room, muttering some ex-

cuse to Mr. Key. That gentleman, interrupted in the midst of a sentence, was astonished at the sight of the young man's drawn, white, despairing face. But he did not follow,—some instinct told him that Arnold wished to be alone.

"A woman, I'll wager!" he said to himself. "They have a way of seesawing us back and forth between paradise and purgatory. He seems to be a splendid young fellow. I like him, and I don't know why any woman wouldn't be glad to make him happy."

From a quiet corner Mr. Payne Todd had been watching the little drama before him; and now, well satisfied with its termination, he slipped quietly away.

"If I can't have her, he shall not either," he muttered. "What fools these mortals be! Any one with half an eye can see how much in love they are; yet will they let a little misunderstanding separate them forever. Ah, well! 'tis no affair of mine now. It is in the hands of Fate."

Philip Arnold walked on and on in the darkness, suffering as only one can suffer who loves with all his heart and mind and soul. He tried to persuade himself that he no longer loved Felice, that it had been only a passing fancy with him, that she was unworthy of any man's love. Then he tried to think it was because of his name,—she could not accept the disgrace; but he knew in his heart that if she loved him, nothing else would matter to her. He tried to hate and despise her for her heartlessness, but in the end love triumphed,—blind, despairing

love. He knew he must go on loving her always.

And Felice, when she finished her song, slipped away to her chamber, and locking the door, threw herself sobbing on the bed, regardless of her finery. She was a crumpled, heart-broken bird, beating her golden wings helplessly against the gates of paradise, which had closed so suddenly in her very face.

CHAPTER XIX

M. DE JOURNET'S MISSION

The following morning all Washington, arrayed in Sabbath best, strolled to the Capitol building, ostensibly to attend divine service, but in reality to see and be seen. Services were held every Sabbath in the House Chamber, and a preacher of any denomination or creed might preach; indeed, once even a woman had officiated. The preceding Sabbath there had been a Catholic priest; to-day it was the good Bishop, whom everybody loved,—and nobody listened to. The Marine Band, in scarlet uniforms, was in the gallery, noisily attempting a few hymns; and then, realizing its failure, gave up trying, and played the "President's March" and other compositions better adapted to its ability, though scarcely in keeping with the day.

A crowd of ladies in the best of Sabbath dresses and bonnets, escorted by equally well-dressed gentlemen, filled the Chamber and overflowed into the halls; and the gayest of all these was Miss Lee, seated like a queen on her throne, surrounded by a dozen gallants, among them the Frenchman, who seemed again the one most favored. She wore a

most becoming blue dress, the color of a robin's egg, and a bonnet of the same shade, adorned with three coquettish little plumes.

Captain Arnold came in with Mr. Key, and when the girl felt his grey eyes turned in her direction, she became even more gay and coquettish, though her cheeks flushed and her hands toyed nervously with her jeweled fan. When the service was over the young men swarmed about her, begging for the privilege of escorting her home, but she gave her hand to M. de Journet, and together they made their way through the crowd, the girl bowing and smiling and dropping a word here and there to a friend. Admiring eyes followed her, and they were not all masculine eyes either; for even the women paid Felice Lee homage with their glances, if not always with their tongues.

Outside on the broad steps they came upon Mr. Lee and the Bishop. Felice and the Bishop had adopted each other years before. She had no grandfather, and he, never having married, had no grandchildren; so "grandfather" he had been to her for years.

"A most excellent sermon, Grandfather. Who gave it to you?"

"Listen to the child!" remarked the Bishop good-naturedly. He was a short, stout man, of ruddy complexion, with penetrating but kindly eyes. "As if she heard one word I said. You were quite too much occupied with coquettings and beaux."

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I did hear at least

one word you said, and quite the best one, too, I am sure."

"I am glad indeed to know you heard one. What was that, pray?"

"'Amen.'"

The young folks gathered about laughed at the Bishop's expense, and he smiled good-naturedly, promising to punish Felice later for her impudence. He and Mr. Lee mounted their horses to ride to Baltimore that afternoon to attend the Conference, which would be in session the next day.

"You must take care of that girl, Maurice; she is much too beautiful and clever to travel the road her mother went," said the Bishop to his companion.

"She is a great responsibility. You know she has broken her betrothal to Payne Todd? That is a load off my mind. I never approved of it; for they are so unsuited to each other they would never be happy together."

"If she doesn't step into something worse," suggested the Bishop.

"You mean the Frenchman? I do not fear anything in that direction; she has heard the story of her mother's misery too often to trust her happiness to a Frenchman. The child is really much in love with a splendid young fellow by the name of Arnold; he is in Washington now, and I feel confident they will soon have everything settled between them."

"She is worthy of the best man in the world," the Bishop replied. "One has only to look in her

eyes to see the promise of a noble, splendid womanhood."

The subject of this conversation walked down the marble steps of the capitol with M. de Journet, and at his request went with him for a walk along the path by the little winding Tiber, under the great forest trees.

"The Bishop is the best man in the world," Felice said. "I wish my chances for future happiness and heavenly reward were half so good as his."

"He is an old man?"

"Not so old as he looks,—only seventy. But he has never spared himself in the least; he has come and gone wherever he was most needed, in all sorts of weather, under all sorts of conditions, sometimes when he was almost too ill to hold up his head. So now his health is very poor; but he keeps on going,—he says he wants to die in harness."

They walked on in silence for a little while before M. de Journet spoke again. He knew that his chance had come, and he was weighing his words well before speaking. Felice's favor toward him the night before and to-day, the fact that her uncle was on his way to Baltimore to be gone some days, and the fact that only the day before he had received an impatient letter from the Emperor,—all these decided him to speak without further delay.

"Mademoiselle, I have tried so many times to see you alone. I have something important to say to you, but fate has not been kind; this is my first opportunity." The girl plucked idly at a wild honey-

suckle vine; he was not the first man to have something important to say to her; she had heard that beginning before. But his next words aroused her interest.

"I have a message for you from His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of France," he said impressively.

"From the Great Napoleon,—for me?" she asked, looking at him with astonished eyes.

"From the Great Napoleon,—for you," the young man repeated; then he continued, choosing his words carefully:

"He and your father were good friends once. Before he became First Consul your father was unusually kind to him, and for that reason he is interested in you."

"But why? He does not know me; he has never seen me."

"You remember a miniature one Douret, an artist, made of you?"

"Yes, it was the one——"

She hesitated, flushing.

"M. Douret exhibited the miniature, together with some others, to the Emperor at St. Cloud one day. He was interested in yours immediately, and asked your name. 'Ah,' said he, 'Mademoiselle du Vallon should be here in her father's country.' So he sent me to find you, and tell you there is money and property of your father's awaiting you, and a place at court befitting your birth." He showed her certain letters and papers, signed by Napoleon

himself, and she could not doubt the truth of what he said.

"But I cannot understand why he should go to so much trouble for me. Why does he do this?"

Now this was the one question which M. de Journet dared not answer truthfully, so he evaded it as best he could.

"I think, for love of your father and in gratitude for his kindness. The Emperor is very grateful, and never forgets a kindness. Ah, Mademoiselle, you do not know what honor awaits you: power, and wealth, and homage,—and Paris! Ah, one can truly live only in Paris. And you, Mademoiselle,—your beauty and wit are wasted here. In Paris they will make you famous. The Emperor has also sent for Madame Jerome Bonaparte and her son; he has decided to recognize them as members of the imperial family. You see how truly kindhearted he is. I have a note from her here saying she will meet me at Annapolis to-morrow, when we sail for France."

"I am glad for Madame Bonaparte," Felice replied. "It is what she has long desired; but for me,—I am happy and contented here with my uncle. No. I thank you, M. de Journet,—you and the Emperor; but I cannot go."

M. de Journet went on to paint in brilliant colors the honor that would be hers at the great Napoleon's gay court,—a court noted the world over for its brilliancy and charm; the power and homage she would have as friend and ward of the Emperor him-

self, the most talked-of and admired man of the time. As the young Frenchman's eloquence grew, the father's French blood stirred in the girl's veins, and she found the proposition more and more alluring.

"As for your uncle, he is naturally much prejudiced against our people, but he is not quite fair; we are not all bad. And you may return to him at any time. Perhaps in a year you will tire of the gay life at court, and desire to return to your mother's country. But surely he loves you enough not to begrudge you a year of happiness and pleasure in your father's land."

"If I could only see him——"

"But that is impossible. Mademoiselle must decide at once. We sail from Annapolis at daybreak to-morrow. It seems to me best for you to go without seeing your uncle,—doubtless he would not consent; but if you go now, he will be satisfied. Mademoiselle will say 'yes,'" he urged eagerly.

Felice hesitated,—and was lost; for, as she hesitated, she thought of Philip Arnold and his rejection of her for the second time, and her heart hardened. Here was her chance. She would go! She would show him that she was no ordinary girl, to be accepted and rejected at will. When the fame of her life at court was heralded in the States, he would see then whom he had scorned. She put the thought of her uncle resolutely from her. The willfulness of her mother and the recklessness of her father took possession of her for the time. "My life is my own,"

she argued with her conscience; "I have the right to do with it as I please."

M. de Journet waited, feeling that he had won; for he saw in the girl's eyes the passionate desire for honor, power, and homage,—a desire which comes into every woman's heart at least once in her lifetime.

"Mademoiselle has decided? She will go?"

"Yes," she answered quickly; "I have decided. I will go."

"I thank you, mademoiselle, for your trust in me and in the Emperor; and you shall have all the things I have promised you,—honor, power, and homage. We must leave here to-night, at nine o'clock. The moon will be up by half past. *L'Etoile* will sail at daybreak."

They walked back to the broad avenue, and homeward, M. de Journet adding a few touches of glamour to the already brilliant welcome which he had pictured for Felice in Paris. When they reached her uncle's house he bade her farewell at the door.

"To-night, mademoiselle, at nine. You will be ready?"

"To-night at nine, I will be ready," Felice repeated calmly, though her heart fluttered wildly. M. de Journet kissed her hand, and watched her disappear through the wide doorway and up the broad stairs.

"*Sacré!*" he muttered under his breath, as he turned away. "Lucky dog,—the Emperor! But I don't envy him the pleasure of taming her; he hasn't had one like her before."

M. de Journet was madly in love with the girl himself, but his fear of the Emperor was stronger than his love. Life for him meant nothing, without the favor and patronage of Napoleon.

A little later he had mounted a horse, and taking the Annapolis road, was riding toward the tavern where the captain of *L'Etoile* was awaiting his orders. He whistled as he rode, thinking of the Emperor's delight when he should see the girl—it would mean restoration to favor, and probably a greatly increased annuity,—perhaps even a title. A few miles from the tavern where the Baltimore and Annapolis roads came together, he met a man, travel-stained and weary, on a limping, foaming horse.

"How much farther to Washington?" inquired the stranger.

"About twelve miles," replied de Journet. "What's the trouble with your horse?"

"I don't know; he's gone lame; I have come from Baltimore since morning, and couldn't get a fresh horse anywhere on the road. Have you heard the news?"

"No; what news?"

"Napoleon, Emperor of France, has abdicated."

De Journet's face turned pale.

"There must be some mistake. It can't be——"

"No mistake. It is true enough."

De Journet stared at the man, trying to comprehend. Napoleon,—the Great, the All Conquering,—abdicated! Slowly he turned his horse back toward Washington.

"Say, sir; if you are going back to the city, would you deliver a dispatch to the French Ambassador? My horse is lame, and I'm half sick."

De Journet took the dispatch. "On one condition," said de Journet. "Three or four miles on the Annapolis road is a tavern. Go there, inquire for Captain Lyon, of the French boat *L'Etoile*. Tell him to have *L'Etoile* ready to sail at daybreak to-morrow. Then get a good drink, go to bed, and sleep twenty-four hours. And, mind you, keep a silent tongue in your head. After your sleep, you may tell all the news you want to."

He gave a dollar to the man, who took it, promising to do as de Journet asked. It was a queer request, but he was tired, the good drink, and the long sleep were just what he needed; so he took the Annapolis road, and went on without question.

De Journet rode back to the city slowly. He was stunned by the news,—it meant that his annuity was gone, his hopes of title and position vanished. But another thought crowded these from his mind. The girl! The great passion that he had stifled since the first time he saw her now surged over him. He need no longer look upon her as the property of the Emperor. She would be his now. The dispatch to the French Ambassador must wait. The news would be a few hours late in reaching Washington,—but what of that? The girl must not know until he had her safe on board *L'Etoile*.

CHAPTER XX

THE BIRD FLEES—AND IS RESCUED

Judy protested vigorously at the mysterious preparations Felice made for her journey, but to no purpose. She even threatened to tell Mrs. Madison as a last resort.

"If you do," Felice said calmly, "I will tell her it is not true. And then I will leave you here when I go."

The thought of Missy going off somewhere, she did not know where, and leaving her behind was too much for Judy; so she promised not to tell Mrs. Madison. She went about, preparing for the journey as Felice directed, but her faithful heart was troubled. She had raised Missy's mother, and had stood by her faithfully during all her misery and sorrow; and she didn't want little Missy to go the road her mother went.

Promptly at nine o'clock, Felice, veiled and muffled, emerged from the house, followed by Judy still muttering her protests. M. de Journet was waiting with a coach, which he assisted the girl to enter, getting in after her. Judy mounted the box, with the driver; and the horses started. Now that she had taken the fatal step, Felice began to feel nervous and

uncertain. She sat in silence, wishing herself safely back at home.

M. de Journet, feeling her uncertainty in her silence, talked pleasantly of many things; then, to allay her fears, he told her that he had received word from Madame Bonaparte that she would meet them at the tavern on the Annapolis road.

"So, you see, in a couple of hours you will be safely in her care," he assured her.

Felice did not reply, but she felt that she would be very glad indeed to see Madame Bonaparte's familiar face.

The horses progressed rapidly, so they were well away from the city when the moon came up. They rode on and on,—for miles. The girl became more and more nervous. There was something in her companion's voice and manner that made her fear him; and she inwardly prayed that she might soon reach the tavern and Madame Bonaparte's protecting care.

The farther they rode from Washington the higher rose M. de Journet's spirits, his manner became more and more familiar. Felice, shuddering, shrunk away from him into her corner of the coach. Her nearness, the perfume of her presence, went to his head; his passion got the better of his prudence, and taking her roughly in his arms, he would have covered her face with kisses.

She screamed for Judy; and at that very moment the coach came to a sudden stop, the door was flung violently open and a rough voice ordered M. de Journet to alight. He obeyed, and found the voice

belonged to a masked man; another stood at the horses' heads; a third covered the driver with his pistol.

M. de Journet swore loudly in French, demanding the meaning of this outrage. The highwayman did not answer, but relieved him of his weapons, tied his hands behind him, and hobbled his feet so he could walk, but not run. Then the bandit ordered the Frenchman to continue on his way to Annapolis and the waiting *L'Etoile*, and, with his heavy-booted foot, assisted him to make a good start; the driver was treated in the same manner.

Having started them on their way, the highwayman, who had first opened the door, handed the terrified girl paper and pen.

"Write," he ordered gruffly.

Tremblingly she put down these words:

"Cousin Dolly:

"On a sudden caprice, I have decided to go to Baltimore, and am on my way now, with Judy and a safe escort. I send you this, so that you will know I am safe. I shall go directly to Uncle Maurice, at Mr. Patterson's."

"Now sign your name."

She obeyed, with unsteady fingers. When she had finished, he took the paper, handed it to the second highwayman, with whom he held a short whispered consultation. Then the second man mounted his horse and rode back toward Washington. The first man climbed into the coach, the third mounted the box, and the horses started.

Felice was terror-stricken,—uncertain what her

fate might be. The men knew her, they had deliberately planned this outrage and had cut off any chance of pursuit. Cousin Dolly would think her safe in Baltimore, her uncle would think her safe at home. It might be a week, or even longer, before her uncle's return to Washington, when he would discover her absence. In the meantime what might not these highwaymen do with her? She shuddered back into her corner; but the highwayman remained silently on his own side of the coach.

They rode on thus in silence,—it seemed to Felice for hours; the silence and uncertainty became almost as unbearable as de Journet's familiarity.

"Where—where—are you taking me?" she asked, when she could bear the suspense no longer.

"To Baltimore,—to your uncle, at Mr. Patterson's," replied the man briefly.

She had not expected him to answer her question, but it was a relief to hear him say something.

"If you are tired, try to sleep," he said, not unkindly. "I give you my word, nothing shall harm you."

The moon had gone down and it was very dark; the girl, quite overcome with excitement and fear, began to sob.

The man moved nervously.

"Don't," he said gently, laying his hand for a moment on her arm. "Please don't."

Something in his voice and the respectful touch of his hand reassured Felice. After a little the sobs ceased and she leaned back against the cushions,

staring wide-eyed into the darkness, praying softly for her safety, and wondering about this highwayman, who could be so rough and then so gentle. She smiled as she thought of his treatment of the Frenchman; it was just what he deserved.

"Are you awake?" the man asked softly.

"Yes."

"We must stop at the tavern ahead to change horses. I am sorry it is necessary to blindfold you, and I have here in my hand a small vial,—one breath of its contents will make you unconscious. If you attempt to cry out, or make any sound, while we are at the tavern, I shall be obliged to give you a breath of it."

He tied a cloth clumsily about her eyes, and a few minutes later the coach drew up before the tavern.

The man ordered two glasses of wine, and placed one in Felice's hands.

"Drink it," he said, but the girl, having heard of drugged wine, poured it quietly out the coach window and handed him back the empty glass, thinking her act would pass unnoticed in the darkness.

"The wine was all right," said her companion, as he took the glass. "You need not have been afraid. Will you drink mine? It will quiet your nerves."

Again something in his voice reassured her. She took the glass, and sipped the refreshing wine gratefully.

The clumsy bandage had slipped the least bit over one eye; the man had lifted his mask, and she caught

a glimpse of his face as the light of a lantern flashed momentarily into the coach.

She was startled, but remembering the vial in his hand, stifled the cry that came to her lips.

The horses being changed, they started on again, making good time. When they had traveled some miles, and the bandage had been removed entirely, the girl spoke again:

"How much farther do we go?"

"I think it is between ten and twelve miles to Baltimore," was the reply.

"I did not ask you how far it is to Baltimore."

"That is our destination," said the man.

"You know that is not true. Why should three highwaymen hold up a lady's coach, dismiss her escort, and then deliver her safely in Baltimore?"

"That I cannot answer."

"It is strange,—very strange. Have you been a highwayman long?"

"No; not long."

"Do you get much money? Does it pay well?"

"No, it does not pay well."

"Then why do you do it?"

"That is another question I cannot answer."

"Have you ever killed anyone?"

"Not since I have been a—highwayman."

"Have you ever held up a lady before?"

"No."

"You do it very well for a beginner."

Felice was silent for a few minutes; then she burst out indignantly:

"You will kindly explain to me, Captain Philip Arnold, what you mean by this outrageous conduct?" She felt his involuntary start, and marked the look of his startled eyes turned toward her. "And where are you taking me?" she continued.

"To your uncle in Baltimore. You were more than half-way when we met you there on the road. If we had returned to Washington, we could not have reached there before daylight; and had you returned after daylight, there would have been endless gossip."

"What right have you to interfere with my plans?" she demanded angrily, "and carry me off to my uncle, as if I were a child?"

"The right of a great love," he answered quietly. "That Frenchman is a scoundrel. When Judy told me——"

"So it was Judy who betrayed me after all?"

"You do not love me, but I shall go on loving you always; and I could not sit quietly by and let you sacrifice yourself. I had to save you from dishonor, even though you hate and despise me more than ever. But when you have time to reflect, I believe you will be grateful for what I have done this night. That French scoundrel was proving himself rather offensive,—wasn't he?—when we interrupted him. Well, that was only the beginning."

"He was a special messenger, sent by the Emperor of France to escort me to my father's land, where honor and wealth await me," she said, with much dignity.

"Don't you know the Emperor of France abdicated his throne a month ago? The news reached Baltimore yesterday, and would have reached Washington had not M. de Journet met the messenger on the road and delayed the message."

"He knew——"

"He knew yesterday afternoon."

Again Felice was silent for some time and the young man thought her too offended with him to speak.

"I am sorry, very sorry indeed to have interfered with your plans and made you angry," he said presently; "but it seemed the only thing I could do. If your uncle had been at home, or if you had a brother or any man in your family whom I could have appealed to in your behalf, I would have done so. But there was no one, so it seemed to me, by right of my great love, I was privileged to do this for you. When we reach Baltimore I shall leave at once for the South and cross your path no more."

The girl was silent for a space. After a time she asked softly, very softly: "Who—who told you—I do—not—love you?"

For a moment Philip was too amazed to speak, scarce believing he had heard her words aright.

"Felice," he cried, crushing her hands in his, "do you? You are not playing with me? Do you love me?" he demanded almost harshly.

"Yes," she answered simply, "even as you love me." And then, in the rumbling coach on the Balti-

more road, as the grey light of dawn streaked the east, she received the long-delayed first kiss.

When the coach,—at sunrise,—entered the outskirts of Baltimore, all misunderstanding and resentment was cleared away. Felice felt at once it must have been Payne who had again sought to wreck her happiness.

"Poor Payne! I am sorry for him," she sighed contentedly, her head on Arnold's shoulder, his arm about her waist. "And, now, please, oh please, don't let anything part us again! I have been lonely,—oh, so lonely!—without you."

"And I, without you, Felice. Many times have I prayed as I went into battle, or rode through the woods, that a Creek arrow might find a place in my heart and end my unhappiness."

"And oh, how I have prayed God to save you from those same Creek arrows! I think my prayers must have more influence in Heaven than yours, Philip. But that shows God does not answer harmful prayers. Yours were wrong, and mine right."

For answer he kissed her again.

"When did Judy tell you? Dear, faithful Judy."

"Last night about dark. She said it was the first chance she had."

"Who were the other two highwaymen?"

"I was sorry to get help, but I could not manage alone. However, they are gentlemen, and good friends of yours, and what they saw and heard last night will go no farther. The man that carried

your note to Mrs. Madison was Mr. Irving; the man outside on the box with Judy is Mr. Key."

When the coach drew up before Mr. Patterson's house on South Street, Mr. Lee, who was walking in the garden, came to meet them.

"Felice, my dear child!" he exclaimed, almost speechless with surprise.

"I decided last night to come to Baltimore," she explained, "and Captain Arnold very kindly escorted me."

"But, Felice,—at night?"

She threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"Now please don't scold. Take Captain Arnold into the garden, and he will tell you the whole story. And,"—she added, blushing, "and then I think he has something else to tell you."

Leaving the two men alone, she ran into the house, where Madame Bonaparte greeted her. At her side was little Bo, a lad of nine, a handsome little fellow, a small reproduction of his famous uncle, and the idol of his mother's heart.

"What do you think of the news?" Felice asked. "You are disappointed not to go to France?"

"Yes, on Bo's account. I had such plans and dreams for him. But, on your account, I am rather relieved. I have never felt that it was right and safe for you to go. Come up and rest, my dear. You must be tired out," and Madame Bonaparte dismissed the subject; nor did she ever mention it again.

But in the shady garden, among the roses, Captain Arnold told Mr. Lee very frankly the whole story of Felice's attempted flight. When he had finished, the minister laid his hand affectionately on the young man's arm.

"I cannot tell you how grateful I am, Captain Arnold. It would have killed me, I think, if she had gone away like that," he said, with tears in his eyes. "I can never thank you enough for saving her."

"You remember," replied Arnold, "I once said that I hoped some day to ask you for your niece's hand. The time has now come, sir, when I can ask you, without violating my conscience."

The tears came into Mr. Lee's eyes as he answered:

"And, you remember, I said I would be a happy old man when I could place that hand in yours. Take her, sir, with my blessing."

CHAPTER XXI

THE RED-COATS

A week later, after Mr. Lee and his niece, accompanied by Captain Arnold, had returned to Washington, the city was startled one morning by the news brought by a dust-covered, excited messenger.

"A large British fleet has sailed up the Chesapeake,—half of it coming up the Potomac, the other half up the Patuxent. They are going to attack Baltimore, or Annapolis, or, maybe, Washington."

Washington, having heard the news, was divided in opinion as to the probable intentions of the British fleet: half the city, headed by General Armstrong, declared that the British would never dare attack the capital; the other half, with Mr. Gerry as leader, was positive the Red-coats were already marching upon the city.

Mr. Madison,—between General Armstrong and his followers on the one hand, and Mr. Gerry and his on the other,—did not know what to believe.

Captain Arnold was one of the first men to offer his services to the President.

"I thank you, Captain Arnold," said the President. "I rather fear we shall need all the good soldiers we can find. We are just starting for General Winder's camp near Bladensburg. Will you ac-

company us? Jennings, a horse for Captain Arnold."

General Armstrong and Mr. Gerry rode ahead, engaged in a warm discussion as to the plans of the British.

Arnold rode beside Mr. Madison, who was nervous and much perturbed.

"I hardly know what to expect," he said anxiously; "but I rather believe they are planning to attack Washington."

"I believe so, too," replied Arnold.

"Whatever comes, I shall of course be with the army," said Mr. Madison. "Captain Arnold, may I put you in charge of my household? May I trust you to see that no harm comes to my wife? I do not trust the servants,—except Jennings and French John; the others will flee at the first sign of danger. Will you take charge there?"

"I am honored by your confidence in me, sir, and I will protect Mrs. Madison with my life," Arnold answered.

"I thank you. I shall feel satisfied to know she is in your care. If the enemy should reach the city, which I hardly think possible, and you find it necessary to flee for her safety, take the north road through Georgetown. And tell my wife to save the papers in the dispatch box on my desk, if she saves nothing else. They are most important."

General Winder's camp, made up more or less of a volunteer, nondescript army, was in a state of great confusion. The men hurried about as if un-

certain where to go, or what to do. On the arrival of the President, General Winder attempted to get the troops into some kind of order so as to marshal them in review before the Commander-in-Chief. Three thousand men,—the majority being raw recruits and half-trained militia,—straggled, uncertain and confused, in review: a rather sorry army for the protection of the Nation's capital. And Mr. Madison, the Commander-in-Chief, seemed quite as confused and uncertain as the men, failing utterly to inspire confidence or arouse their spirits.

Arnold feared for the safety of the Federal capital should this army be called upon to defend it. He wished heartily for General Jackson, who could take this raw, undisciplined army and in a few hours have it ready to follow him against any enemy,—such was his ability to inspire his men with his own indomitable spirit.

Mr. Madison decided to remain at the camp, and hastily scrawling a note to his wife, gave it to Arnold to deliver.

"Tell Mrs. Madison I shall stay here where my duty calls me, and tell her not to fear for my safety. I have written her in the note that you are to take command of the household."

The young man returned to the city, and took up his duties as protector of the Presidential Mansion. Mr. Lee brought his niece over and left her with Mrs. Madison, going out to join the army, thinking he might be of some help in inspiring the men to do their duty.

"I am so glad you are here, Philip," said Felice, slipping her hand into his. "Are you?"

"Wherever you are is paradise to me," he replied.

For three days the army and the city waited, uncertain what the British intended doing. Then came the news: "The British are marching toward Bladensburg." And it would be hard to say where was the greater consternation and confusion,—in the camp, or in the city.

Arnold, as a precaution in the event of invasion, ordered French John to get a wagon and horse, and, under Mrs. Madison's instruction, to load into it the things that must be saved. Other people were doing the same,—the streets were crowded with people, loaded wagons, coaches, and frightened servants.

When the British forces arrived in sight of Bladensburg, they seemed a most formidable army to the confused, trembling Americans. And to the British, almost exhausted from the long march in the hot sun, over roads thick with dust, the American army, drawn up and waiting, seemed quite as formidable. So they faced each other,—these two armies,—each very much afraid of the other.

The British began the attack immediately,—an attack of short duration. The American army was no match for these trained British veterans, even in their exhausted condition; the militia and volunteers began to scatter and retreat almost at once. General Winder and his officers made brave attempts to rally them, but without avail,—they continued to scatter and retreat.

When the news of the army's defeat reached the city, all was dismay and confusion. Carriages and loaded wagons drove rapidly away, and people swarmed out into the country in every direction. The panic-stricken army retreated into the city, and on to the heights of Georgetown, without stopping.

At the President's house all the servants, except Jennings and French John, had fled at the first alarm, and the wagon-load of valuables had been sent to Baltimore to be deposited at the Bank of Maryland for safe keeping.

"Jennings," Mrs. Madison ordered, "go find your master and stay with him. Don't let any harm come to him," she implored, with tears in her eyes.

And the faithful negro rode off to do her bidding.

"And now, Mrs. Madison, you and Felice and Judy get into the coach,"—began Arnold.

But a scream from Mrs. Madison interrupted, as she pointed, speechless, toward Capitol Hill. It was swarming with figures in scarlet uniforms, while flames and smoke were bursting from the windows of the building. A detachment of Red-coats was already riding down the broad avenue toward the President's house. Arnold hurried the ladies into the coach, and ordered French John to drive on with all possible speed. But French John needed no urging, and drove madly through the city and on through Georgetown. Arnold mounted his horse and hesitated only long enough to fire a shot at the officer leading the detachment down the avenue. He had recognized Captain Carlisle, of His Majesty's Ship

Surprise. But the officer was too far away to be within range. Not daring to wait longer, Arnold galloped after the carriage, out through Georgetown, across the bridge, and along the dusty North road. By the time he overtook the carriage the sky had grown dark and threatening, and great drops of rain were beginning to fall.

"What's ahead on this road?" he asked of French John; who replied that a mile or so on was a small tavern. "I think we had better stop there," Philip decided. "We are going to have a bad storm."

When they drew up before the tavern the landlord came out to welcome them, bowing and smiling. But when he recognized the Presidential coach and the lady just alighting, his brow clouded, and he said angrily:

"You can't stay here, madame. Your husband's to blame for all this war and trouble, and you must move on. My roof don't protect any of his kin or friends."

Mrs. Madison was dismayed at this reception, and would have retreated into the coach but Captain Arnold took charge of affairs. He spoke quietly, yet with a certain hardness of tone that convinced the landlord of his earnestness.

"These ladies are coming in out of this storm,—whether with you as landlord or not is for you to decide."

The landlord decided quickly enough, and led the way sullenly into the house.

"Give the ladies the best chamber you have, and

have dinner served to them at once," Arnold ordered. "If you see to it that they are well served during their stay, you shall have double price."

The landlord seemed to consider this promise worth remembering; for Mrs. Madison and Felice were given a large, cheerful chamber at the head of the stairs, and in a little while two servants appeared and spread a most excellent dinner on the table. Mrs. Madison would eat only a few bites: she kept returning to the window, gazing out into the storm, and with tears in her eyes, thinking of poor "James," out somewhere exposed to the raging elements, or probably a prisoner in the hands of the Red-coats.

"Don't worry so, Cousin Dolly," said Felice. "I am sure Cousin Madison is all right. Jennings will find shelter for him somewhere."

"I know, my dear; but he has a bad cold already, and he will be drenched to the skin, and will stay about in his damp clothes all night. Or the British may have captured him by this time," she sobbed.

"Now, Cousin Dolly, don't try to imagine all the things that might happen to him. More than likely, he is dry and warm, and eating his dinner at this moment."

Felice was frankly hungry, and begged Philip to join her at dinner; but he refused to leave his post outside the door. When she had finished eating, she carried a plate out to him, and sat beside him on the steps while he ate.

"Do you think Cousin Madison is in any danger? Cousin Dolly is so worried about him."

Before Arnold could answer, a muffled figure in a dripping greatcoat entered below, and after a word with the landlord, mounted the stairs.

"Well, Captain, my confidence in you is justified. The ladies are safe!"

"Cousin Madison!" Felice exclaimed joyously. "You are safe too! Cousin Dolly has been so worried."

Arnold opened the door into the chamber, and then closed it softly behind Mr. Madison. Mrs. Madison, at first, did not recognize the muffled figure in the dripping greatcoat, and when she did, ran to him, throwing her arms about him, regardless of his wet garments.

"James, I am so glad you are safe! But you are soaked through; take off your coat and sit here by the fire. Drink this wine."

She settled him in a comfortable chair before the fire, and sat beside him, holding his hand.

"Tell me, dear,—what have the British done?"

"A great deal of damage! The Capitol and our house are in ruins,—only the outer walls standing;—all the public buildings are more or less damaged, and a great deal of private property as well. The British are camped now on Capitol Hill; our army is on the Georgetown Heights. Our men are poorly protected from the storm, and very much frightened. It is a terrific storm; houses and trees have been blown down in every direction."

"And you have been out in it! I am so thankful you are safe," she said with deep feeling.

"You are comfortable here?" he asked.

"Yes, very comfortable; and Captain Arnold has been most kind and courteous. You will remain here the rest of the night?"

"No; I must go back to the army. In the morning, as soon as it is light, we must make an attempt to drive the British out, before they do any more damage. God knows they have done enough already."

And suddenly the man,—not physically strong at best, and now utterly exhausted from the mental and bodily strain of the day,—buried his face in his arms and wept bitterly.

"To-day has been a disgrace to the country, Dolly; and they will say I am to blame. This trouble with England is too much for me. I can't handle it. God knows I have done my best, and have tried hard to make a good President; and I could have managed very well if we had not been forced into this war. I am no soldier. I know nothing of war and its problems."

His wife put her arms about the bent, tired figure, and spoke to him lovingly.

"But you have done the very best you could, James. Whatever they say, they must acknowledge you have tried. Go back to the army, lead our men to-morrow, and give the British the best trouncing they have had since '76. If I were only a man, I would go at your side."

The President smiled sadly at her enthusiasm.

"I wish you could go, Dolly. I believe, with you

at my side, we could lead the army to victory. You are a better soldier than I am. Ah, my dear, I shall be very glad when my time of service to my country is over, and you and I can return to Montpelier, and live in peace and quiet and happiness."

There was a low knock at the door, and Captain Arnold stepped inside.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but Jennings is outside. He says the British have learned of your whereabouts, and a detachment of soldiers is on the road within a few miles of the tavern. I do not trust our landlord; it will be safer for you to leave at once."

"Thank you, Captain. Tell Jennings I will be there immediately."

He turned to his wife, took her in his arms, and kissed her. "Good-bye, Dolly. I shall remember your words, and do my best to lead the army to victory in the morning."

"But, dear; where are you going now? How——"

"Jennings will know some roundabout way to get me back to Georgetown through the woods. Do not worry. I shall reach there safely. Good-bye."

Kissing her again, he wrapped his greatcoat about him, and went forth into the storm, followed by the faithful Jennings.

"Poor Cousin Madison!" said Felice, standing beside Philip at the head of the stairs. "And poor Cousin Dolly! I should be miserable if you were out in this terrible storm, Philip."

Her lover slipped his arm about her, and she leaned

lightly against him. They stood thus for some time in the dim light of the hallway, whispering words of love.

Half an hour later, a party of British soldiers entered the tavern noisily. They removed their dripping storm capes, and stamping about in their scarlet uniforms, called for something to drink.

"Hey, landlord!" said a young officer, "we're looking for one Jimmy Madison. Seen anything of him?"

The landlord was busy supplying the demands of the soldiers.

"Can't say as I have. But his lady is above stairs."

"Is she, now? Well, boys, warm yourselves inside and out while I step up and interview the lady. Which room?"

"First door at the head of the stairs," replied the landlord.

"You had better go inside, Felice," Philip whispered, as the young officer sprang up the stairs two steps at a time. But instead of obeying, she slipped into the shadow of a nearby corner. The young British officer, whistling gayly, came face to face with a motionless soldier, standing in front of the first door at the head of the stairs. He recognized Arnold, even in the dim light.

"Well, if it isn't Mr. Arnold again!" and he added, with a sneer: "Has nobody yet offered you your price?"

Arnold did not answer, but stood motionless in

front of the door, looking past the other man, as though unconscious of his presence. Captain Carlisle took a coin from his pocket, flipped it insolently at Arnold, and continued in the same sneering tone:

"Well, there's a shilling,—pay in advance for information as to the whereabouts of little Jimmy Madison," and he laughed insolently at his own joke. But he stopped short in the midst of his laughter. From somewhere in the shadows a lady had come forward, and stood beside Captain Arnold, her hand on his arm.

"I had hoped, Captain Carlisle," she said, haughtily, "that since our last meeting you had learned some manners. But I see you have not. I am sorry."

"I beg your pardon, madame, I was not aware of your presence. I hope——"

The door of the chamber opened suddenly, and Mrs. Madison stood there, a brightly burning candle in her hand.

"Who is it, Captain Arnold? What is the trouble?"

Arnold stepped aside; the young British officer bowed low. The woman was the most beautiful he had ever seen, stately and imperious, every inch a queen, as she stood there, the candle lighting her face.

"I beg your pardon, madame. I am looking for Mr. Madison. I am sorry this duty has been thrust upon me."

"He is not here," she replied calmly.

"Has he been here?" inquired Captain Carlisle.

"I refuse to answer that question," said Mrs. Madison.

"Will you give me your word of honor he is not here now?"

"I give you my word of honor."

"Thank you, madame; it is sufficient. May I have the honor?" and kneeling before her, he kissed her hand gallantly. She smiled gravely, and closed the door.

"Captain Arnold, if your President were as much a king as his lady is a queen, the British army that burned your Capitol yesterday would be retreating yet. I beg your pardon for my insulting words to you. I am sure, if the young lady champions your cause, you must be all right. Good-night, madame. Good-night, Captain. Here's hoping we may meet again somewhere,—in times of peace."

He bowed again and, hat in hand, descended the stairs.

"Come on, boys; we'll get back to camp. Jimmy's not here, but his wife is. I've kissed the hand of America's queen,—the handsomest queen on or off a throne!"

CHAPTER XXII

"BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT"

Early the next morning came word from Mr. Madison that the British had stolen away silently during the night, leaving the city deserted and almost in ruins. It was a heavy-hearted population that swarmed back to Washington when the news spread, bringing with them the valuables they had carried away.

As French John drove the Presidential coach through the streets toward the house, the President came galloping to meet his wife.

"The house is uninhabitable, Dolly, and I have arranged for temporary use of the Tayloe mansion," he said to her through the coach window. Then he turned and rode beside Captain Arnold.

"I am greatly obliged to you, Captain Arnold, for taking good care of the ladies."

"It was nothing, sir. There was little to do and I appreciated the honor of doing that much."

When they drove past the smoldering ruins of the White House,—with only bare, smoky walls standing,—Mrs. Madison burst into tears. It had been her home, and though only a temporary one, she loved the stately house and its contents. And then, too,

all the little personal things a woman loves were destroyed with it.

The coach drew up in front of the Tayloe mansion,—the "Octagon House," as it was called,—with pillared portico from which one had a charming view of the Potomac and Arlington in the distance. The President and his wife paused a moment to admire the view, then entered the circular vestibule, and took possession of their new home; Mrs. Madison possessing not even a change of dress, and the President not even a clean shirt ruffle.

To the right of the hall-way was the drawing room, —a handsome room with quaintly carved mantel, shining brass andirons, and great silver candlesticks. Felice slipped in there, and Captain Arnold followed.

"Felice," he whispered, taking her in his arms, "when are we to be married? I can't wait much longer."

"Listen to the man!" exclaimed Felice. "Why, we have been betrothed only a fortnight."

"Ah, but you must remember that I have been waiting for you all my life; and it has been a year and some months since I first saw you."

"What do you say to Christmas?" replied Felice.

"Why, my dear, that is four long months; I couldn't possibly wait that long," replied Philip.

"Thanksgiving Day then?"

"Too long!"

"Well, then, the middle of November?"

"But, Felice——"

"You needn't argue," said the girl coyly; "for if

you do, I shall say next spring. Do you think I am going to settle down to a humdrum, married existence without any courtship at all?"

"But, sweetheart; our life is going to be one long, sweet courtship."

"Perhaps, but I am going to have a little beforehand, just to be sure."

The young man sighed.

"I can't see any need of waiting. But I suppose, if your mind is made up, there is no use to argue."

"That's a good, sensible man!" she put her arms about his neck and kissed him. "I hope you will follow that precept, and always remember that when my mind is made up it is useless to argue. Cousin Dolly says we must be married at Montpelier. It will be Indian Summer then and lovely in Virginia, and she says we are to spend our honeymoon there, and stay just as long as we like."

"That is most kind and thoughtful of Mrs. Madison," replied Philip.

Mrs. Madison had gone upstairs to select a chamber for her own use; her husband had already taken possession of an octagon-shaped room at the front of the house for his office. It had formerly been a lady's boudoir, and was decorated with delicate wall paper, depicting handsome shepherds making love to dainty Watteau shepherdesses. Jennings was at work, removing the daintily upholstered furniture and delicate hangings, and replacing them with furnishings more suitable for the cabinet of a President.

Now that the danger was over, the servants had

come straggling back, and the household was soon settled in the new home. Felice returned to her uncle's house, which the British had not disturbed, and Captain Arnold returned to the Inn, refusing Mr. Lee's urgent invitation to be his guest. Washington settled down again after the excitement; Congress resumed its interrupted work in other quarters, until the Capitol could be rebuilt; and everything went on as usual.

One morning, about three weeks after the disastrous invasion of the city, Captain Arnold received a message that the President wished to see him immediately. He hurried to the temporary Presidential house, and was ushered up the broad white stairs to the octagon boudoir,—now, a most business-like office; the pretty love-making Watteaus quite obscured with war maps, books, and stacks of papers. Mr. Madison sat behind a large desk on which were numerous letters, papers, and important-looking documents. Arnold was glad indeed to see again his friend, Mr. Key,—the only other occupant of the room besides Mr. Madison.

"Good-morning, Captain. Please be seated. You know Mr. Key, of course?" said the President. "He is about to start on a rather dangerous mission. A friend of his,—a doctor of Upper Marlborough, and a non-combatant,—was captured by the British, and is held a prisoner on board one of their ships. Mr. Key goes to obtain, if possible, this friend's release. It is his earnest wish that you accompany him, if you are willing to do so."

"I shall be very glad to accompany him," replied Arnold; "and feel honored that he should choose me. When do you start, Mr. Key?"

"At once, Captain Arnold," said Mr. Key, and continued gratefully: "I appreciate, more than I can express, your ready willingness to accompany me. As Mr. Madison says, it is a dangerous mission, and may end disastrously for both of us. You are willing to take the risk?"

"Yes, I am willing to take whatever risk there may be."

"Here are your credentials. I hope you may be successful," said Mr. Madison.

The two young men left the house together, and started on their way. As they passed Mr. Lee's house, Arnold asked permission to stop for a moment, and Mr. Key readily agreed, saying he would get their horses and return with them to Mr. Lee's house in a few minutes.

Philip was shown into the drawing-room, and Felice came to him at once. He explained the object of his trip with Mr. Key.

"Oh, Philip, please do not go! Suppose the British take you prisoner, too. You can't go. I refuse to permit you."

Philip smiled.

"You said the other day you hoped I would follow a certain precept and remember that when your mind is made up it is useless to argue. Well, I want you to follow the same precept, and remember that when mine is made up, it is also useless to argue."

"But suppose we each make up our mind in a different direction, then what?"

Philip laughed again.

"Let us hope we never do that. Good-bye, sweetheart,—for a few days. I will come back to you soon."

The two young men mounted their horses and rode to Baltimore. Arriving there, they found that Mr. Key's friend was held a prisoner on board the British ship *Surprise*. In a small cartel vessel, with a flag of truce flying from the mast, they made their way out into the bay, in search of the *Surprise*. After some difficulty, they located her among the other British ships, and were permitted to go aboard. The first person to greet them on deck was the now familiar young Captain Carlisle.

"Ah, Mr. Arnold, we meet once again. Fate seems determined to throw us together. Do we meet this time as friend or foe? Perhaps you have a proposition——"

Before he could finish, or Arnold could make the angry reply that rose to his lips, Mr. Key interrupted:

"If Admiral Cochrane is aboard, kindly present these papers to him. Our business is with him."

Carlisle took the papers and withdrew. He was gone some time, and the two young men waited impatiently for his return. When at last he appeared, he was followed by a man of middle age, who greeted Mr. Key warmly and was introduced as Dr. Beanes.

"I am most grateful to you, Francis, for taking

all this trouble for me. And to you, too, Captain Arnold; you have won my lasting gratitude, and I hope some day I may be of service to you."

"Whatever service I have rendered has been rendered gladly to a friend of Mr. Key's," replied Arnold.

"The gentleman is released," said Captain Carlisle, "and you may all return to your cartel vessel; but the boat must stay where it is for the present. If you attempt to leave, you will be fired on. We are about to storm Fort McHenry, and capture your city of Baltimore."

With a young marine, whom he called Gibbs, he accompanied the three Americans to their little boat. When they were aboard, Arnold asked for a private word with the young British officer.

"Captain Carlisle, three times you have deliberately insulted me. Before, circumstances forbade my demanding satisfaction. I do so now, at whatever time and place may suit your convenience."

The other man smiled calmly.

"Shall we say here, and now, with swords?" he queried.

"As you please."

Mr. Key and Mr. Gibbs were called on to act as seconds, and both protested against the proposed duel. When Arnold explained to Mr. Key his reasons for demanding satisfaction, he said no more, but agreed to act as second.

So there on the deck of the little boat the two faced each other,—Arnold grave-eyed and earnest,

the other smiling calmly. They were well-matched, and fought for some time, each successfully parrying the other's thrusts. The Englishman was the first to draw blood.

"A mere scratch," Arnold declared as the red blood dyed the ruffles of his shirt.

The mere scratch seemed to anger and strengthen him, and the Englishman began to realize that he had underestimated his foe. Of a sudden,—he hardly knew how it happened,—his sword flew from his hand, and he was lying on the deck, the blood flowing freely from a wound in his breast. Mr. Gibbs and Dr. Beanes were beside him at once, and Captain Arnold, too, very much concerned.

"Is he much hurt, Doctor?" he asked anxiously.

"A right good scratch," the doctor replied.

"Don't let him die, Doctor," Arnold begged. "I didn't want to kill him. If you can save his life, whatever service I have rendered you will be amply repaid."

"I will do my best, Captain. If we can stop the flow of blood; the only danger is that he may bleed to death."

The young man opened his eyes.

"Will you shake hands, Captain Arnold? And have you received satisfaction? I did not think you could do it, but you were too quick for me,—that last thrust."

"I am sorry, sir. I did not want to injure you seriously," Arnold replied with remorse.

"That is all right, Captain. You were quite jus-

tified. I would have done the same. Now that we have settled our difficulty, shall we be friends?"

Dr. Beanes,—with the aid of Arnold, Mr. Key, and Gibbs,—worked hard to staunch the flow of blood, and at last succeeded; and the young man, very weak, lay sleeping quietly.

The British ships had begun firing on Fort McHenry, and the remainder of the day the three Americans watched eagerly the American flag waving over the Fort. They feared at any moment to see the stars and stripes give place to the British flag. When night came and the firing continued, they could see, occasionally, by the light of the rockets and bombs bursting in the air, that the flag still waved triumphantly. Captain Carlisle had awakened, and, except for the weakness, was himself again. Through the long night those on board the little boat sat about, waiting to see what the outcome of the fighting would be. An hour or two before daylight the firing suddenly ceased; all was black, dark, and silent. The three Americans waited with grave faces and anxious hearts for the dawn; they feared the Fort had fallen.

It seemed ages before the first grey light of dawn streaked the east, and gradually spread over the whole sky; the field glasses on board the little boat were turned anxiously toward the Fort.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mr. Key, as he caught the gleam of the red and white bars and the blue background of the stars waving quietly in the early morning air.

"Gentlemen," said Captain Carlisle, "I had expected to escort you into *our* Baltimore this morning, but I shall not have that privilege. You are now at liberty to return to *your* Baltimore. I bid you good-bye. Captain Arnold, I congratulate you, sir, on being a most fortunate man. Come, Gibbs; we will return to the *Surprise*."

As the little boat made its way slowly back to the city Arnold and Dr. Beanes stood at the rail, watching the stars and stripes waving so bravely above Fort McHenry, and their hearts swelled with patriotic pride. Mr. Key paced up and down the deck, scribbling with a pencil on the back of a letter he had taken from his pocket. Just before they reached the city, he joined the other two men, and handed the paper to Dr. Beanes.

"Read it," he said briefly, and Arnold listened, while the Doctor read aloud the scribbled words:

"Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

"On that shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines in the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner; oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!"

CHAPTER XXIII

MONTPELIER

In the next few weeks Captain Arnold realized the truth of the saying that everybody loves a lover. Mr. Key learned of his extreme sensitiveness in regard to his father and his name, and quietly passed the knowledge about, until everyone sympathized with the young man and determined to make him feel that he was honored and respected for his own worth, regardless of his ill-famed father. Under this kindly treatment, he became less grave and retiring, and joined heartily in the social life of the little city. Indeed, there was not a gayer, happier young man in Washington. He almost forgot the burden of disgrace that had overshadowed his life since the day he had learned his father's name; he forgot the debt he had pledged himself to pay; he remembered only that Felice was his, that soon they were to be married, and that he was blissfully happy. As Felice's betrothed husband, and as a special friend of the President and his amiable wife, he was received everywhere as an honored guest.

The two often talked of what they would do after the wedding. Arnold wished to return to the South,

but Felice urged him to stay in Washington, being confident that her Cousin Madison would see that he had some appointment there.

After what seemed ages to the impatient bridegroom the time for the wedding arrived at last, and the bridal party, one cool clear day, started for Montpelier: Mrs. Madison, the President, and Mr. Lee riding in the Presidential coach drawn by four stout horses; while the young folks,—Felice on Mr. Jefferson, Captain Arnold, Barbara, the Randolph girls, Mr. Key, Mr. Irving, and Mr. Bushrod Hunter, —rode horseback.

At first the road was dry and dusty and uninteresting, but in the afternoon, when they had reached and passed the Virginia line, the roadside and hills were ablaze with scarlet sumach and poison oak, and the trees were a riot of gold and scarlet and brown while the sky was deep azure, with touches of hazy pink and grey and gold.

"This is Our Virginia," said Miss Randolph, riding beside Captain Arnold. "Do you wonder that we are proud to boast of her?"

"It is beautiful," he replied. "And your pride is quite justifiable. Virginia has an enviable reputation for her statesmen, her beautiful women, her hospitality, and her scenery."

The party slept that night at a little wayside tavern, noted for cleanliness and excellent Virginia cookery. Word had been sent ahead, so everything was in readiness for the entertainment of the President and his friends.

The next day the young ladies rode in the coach with Mrs. Madison, while the President and Mr. Lee joined the young men in the saddle. The talk in the coach was of satin wedding gowns, lace gloves, pink tulle, silver tissue, silken hose, jewels, and spangles. Outside it was of war and politics, the proposed treaty with England, the exiling of the defeated Napoleon to the island of St. Helena, General Jackson's success in the South.

Just before sundown the party entered the gates of Montpelier, and rode up the long shady avenue of trees to the house. It was a low, broad colonial mansion, with wide porch, some sixty feet in length. There was a charming garden, shaped like an immense horseshoe, and all about were tulip trees, silver poplars, and weeping willows; in the distance rose the Blue Ridge mountains,—wave on wave of misty blue ridges outlined against the sky. Inside, the house was furnished in simple elegance with Persian rugs, mahogany furniture, handsome portraits, family silver, and beautiful damask, and brocade hangings.

Mrs. Madison bade her guests welcome, and charged the numerous servants to show them to their rooms and look after their comfort. Then, with her husband, she hurried to a distant wing of the house, where the aged Mrs. Madison lived in quiet and peace, with her books and her knitting.

"Ah, my dear James and Dolly, I am glad to see you!" she said as they kissed her. "Dolly, as usual,

looks as fresh and blooming as a rose. But you, James, look more tired and worn than ever. You work too hard. And I hear you have a wedding party with you. Dolly, tell me about them."

Mrs. Madison told her about the bride and bridegroom, and named the other wedding guests.

"I knew both their mothers,—pretty Ellen Lee, who ran away with the Frenchman, and Margaret Shippen, the beauty and toast of Philadelphia, before she married General Arnold. Both matches turned out most unhappily. I trust this young couple may be more successful than their parents. And young Mr. Irving! I must see him and tell him how I have enjoyed 'Diedrich Knickerbocker' and his 'History of New York.' "

The lonely old lady did not often desire to meet guests, so her request to see Mr. Irving was repeated to him at once, and the young man gladly came and charmed away an hour or two in her company. She was delighted with him, and begged that he come in to see her again.

Supper was spread on the wide verandah; some of the neighbors had arrived, and after supper there was dancing. In the midst of the gayety, Felice and Philip slipped away for a few moments into the moonlit, box-bordered garden, where the purple asters and a few late roses were in bloom.

"Are you happy, Felice?" Philip whispered.

"Very, very happy. It seems almost too good to last," she replied sweetly.

"But it shall last,—always, sweetheart; for in the morning you will be mine forever."

For some time they stood in silence, his arm about her waist, she leaning lightly against his shoulder. Suddenly she drew closer, and clasped his hand tightly in hers.

"What is it, dear?" he whispered.

"I was thinking of the dreadful time when I thought you were—dead. Oh, Philip, you will never leave me again, will you?"

"No, dear; never again."

"Last night I dreamed,—never mind, I shall not tell you what,—but I am glad dreams do not often come true. Do you remember the day you called yours, when we rode from St. Stephens?"

"Every moment of the day," he answered; "every word you spoke, every gesture you made. I envied every breeze that touched your lips and cheek."

"Do you remember how you made Mark run?"

"Yes, and how you punished me for my transgression. Did you know then that you loved me?"

"I think I loved you from the first time I saw you, but I would not admit it, even to myself, until after that dreadful day at Fort Mimms. I thought the Indians had—killed you." She shuddered at the memory of that terrible experience, which she could never forget. "God has been good," she continued softly, "to keep you safely for me to this hour."

She began to sing softly:

"Of a' the airts the winds can blaw
I dearly like the west."

The young folks were calling them from the house, and they reluctantly returned to join in the merry-making in their honor.

The wedding was to be at ten o'clock the next morning.

The household, much excited, was astir early, the young ladies all dressed in their wedding finery. Felice was unusually quiet and calm, as Judy, with Cousin Dolly's help, dressed her in the silvery satin wedding gown and soft old lace that Cousin Dolly herself had worn on her own wedding day.

When she was quite ready the older woman kissed her with tears in her eyes. She was thinking of her boy, far away in foreign lands. It had been a cherished wish that he should marry this favorite cousin. But, ah, well!—she must not spoil the girl's wedding day by tears and vain regrets.

"Yo' shoh am a lubly bride, Missy. Yo' ma was de lublies' eber Ah seed befo', but Ah b'leeves yo' is de leas' might lublier dan yo' ma wur."

When the bride entered the drawing-room below, where the guests were gathered, there was a murmur of surprise and wonder at her beauty. Every girl is beautiful in her wedding robes, but this bride far surpassed any the little company had ever seen. With her hand in his, she and Philip stood before Mr. Lee as he read the marriage service in a low, impressive voice, vibrant with emotion.

Philip, in his black velvet suit and lace ruffles, was a proud and handsome bridegroom.

Scarcely had the last words of the service been

read, and while the two were receiving the felicitations of their friends, a messenger arrived posthaste, with the request that he see Mr. Madison at once. For some time afterward the President remained closeted in his chamber, in earnest consultation with Mrs. Madison. Then his wife withdrew, and he sent for Captain Arnold.

When the young man entered the room he found Mr. Madison standing gravely beside his desk,—a folded paper in either hand.

"Captain Arnold, I am sorry to disturb you so soon after the plighting of your troth, but I have just received an urgent request from General Jackson, asking that you join him in New Orleans at once. As you know, he has captured Pensacola, and successfully defended Mobile against the British. He is already on his way to New Orleans, which he thinks the British will attack next. He expects to reach there early in December, and asks that you join him there, without delay."

He paused for a moment, then continued:

"On the other hand, I have taken a great fancy to you, as also has Mrs. Madison, and for that reason, and for the sake of little Felice, we are anxious to keep you here with us. I have here two papers,—one is your commission as a Colonel in the regular army, the other is your appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, with duties in Washington. I shall leave you to decide which of the two you will accept." He laid the papers, side by side, on the desk.

"Thank you, sir. I don't think the decision will take long," said Arnold.

"You mean the army? As you please; but remember the little wife. You have her to consider now. Shall I send her to you?"

"If you please, sir."

Mr. Madison left the room, and Philip stood quietly looking from the window, until the door opened and Felice entered softly. It was their first moment alone together since the wedding, and for a space they forgot everything else. When they had returned to earth, Philip told her of the two commissions.

"You have chosen?" she asked when he finished.

"Of course, dear; there is only one choice for me; my duty is with the army."

"But, Philip; you would be serving your country just as much here in Washington. Men can do as much for their country in peace as in war."

"I think this office is one which your cousin has created more or less to accommodate me and keep me here," replied Philip. "I do not believe I would be doing any real service by accepting the appointment."

"But, Philip, you promised me only last night you would never leave me again."

"This is only for a little while, sweetheart; I shall come back to you soon."

"And only the night before last I dreamed I saw you lying before me, wounded and dying."

She argued and pleaded with him, but without

avail, until she resorted to a woman's most effective argument, tears.

He soothed and comforted her, with troubled face. Only a few moments before had he vowed "to love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her . . ." "to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, . . . to love and to cherish, till death us do part," and now he was planning to desert her on their very wedding day. Suddenly his great overpowering love took possession of him, the desire to be with her always, never to leave her side. Clasping her passionately in his arms for a moment, his lips touched hers; then releasing her, he took from the desk his appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

"Come, Felice, I have decided. Let us go and tell Mr. Madison."

The girl smiled radiantly through her tears:

"Philip! Philip!" she cried, "I am so happy now, —oh, so happy!"

CHAPTER XXIV

COLONEL ARNOLD OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

It seemed to Captain Arnold that there was a look of disappointment in Mr. Madison's eyes when he told him of his decision. But if he were disappointed, his words did not betray him.

"I am very glad you have decided to stay with us, Captain. I thought that perhaps the little lady would have something to say. Now that you have joined the order of Benedicts, it will be well to remember never to decide anything without consulting the wife. I have found that a safe rule to follow."

Mrs. Madison and the young ladies were delighted for Felice's sake; the young men congratulated him warmly, but it seemed to Arnold that there was a look of disapproval in their eyes; and although they apparently treated him in the same friendly, cordial way, he thought he detected a slight change in their manner toward him. He felt a certain depression of spirits, and only by keeping his eyes on Felice, flitting about and singing like a bird in her joy, could he quiet the doubt that arose in his mind.

"I have done right," he argued. "It would break her heart; and I have promised so often to make

her happy. I cannot begin at the very beginning by making her miserable."

That evening, after supper, there was more dancing and merry-making. Felice enjoyed everything to the fullest, and was the center and life of the company; but Philip could not force himself to join in the gayety; after looking on for a few minutes, he slipped away to the moonlit garden, and walked up and down the paths, smoking his pipe in moody silence. And then, in the quiet of the garden, with the laughter and noise in the distance his conscience began giving him trouble.

"Let absolutely nothing,—not even the woman you love,—come between you and your duty." And, argue as he would, to all his arguments there was the same reply: "Let absolutely nothing,—not even the woman you love,—come between you and your duty."

To him his duty was quite plain,—it lay in service to his country, not in a mere subordinate, more or less unnecessary civil office, which any man might fill, but on the field of battle, on the firing line. But to leave Felice now,—just when he had won her,—would be hard. Few men loved as he did, with his whole heart and mind and soul, and fewer still had so high a standard of honor and duty. It was a desperate struggle between these two elements in his character; but in the end the latter won, and the great love lay bruised and torn and conquered.

It was at the moment of victory that the woman he loved came to him, like some lovely vision,—a

scarf of filmy lace about her head and shoulders. Slipping her hand in his, she laid her head on his shoulder.

"Why did you come away?" she asked. "We have been having such a good time."

"But you did not need me," said the young captain.

"My heart has been out here with you all the time, Philip. I miss you every second you are out of my sight," was the reply.

He held her in silence, trying to find courage to tell her of his decision.

"Sweetheart, I have changed my mind. I cannot stay; I must go," he said simply.

"Philip, I thought we settled that once for all this morning."

"But I have not been satisfied all day," said he, "and to-night I have decided. I must start early to-morrow morning."

She went over again all her arguments of the morning, and at last resorted to her final argument of tears; but to no purpose. Philip was tender and loving, but firm.

"Philip, please don't! I cannot let you go! Say you will stay with me," she pleaded,—her soft arms about his neck, her lips on his. It was almost more than he could do to withstand the entreaty in her lovely eyes, the pleading of her sweet lips. Again he was on the point of yielding, but the still, small voice came to his rescue,—"not even the woman you love," —and he answered firmly:

"No, sweetheart; I cannot stay, I must go."

He felt her stiffen and draw away from him; the weeping ceased, and he recalled in a flash the only other time he had seen her angry,—in the little garden in Mobile.

"Then," she said, her voice cold and calm, "you may go *now*. You need not wait until morning."

"Felice, don't be angry!" he begged. "Try to see this from my standpoint. It is my duty, I am pledged——"

"I have heard all those arguments; it is not necessary to repeat them."

And she stood like a piece of marble in the moonlight. "You may stay,—or go to-night. And, if you go, you need not return."

"Felice! You do not know what you are saying! You do not mean that?"

He tried to take her hand, to plead and argue with her again; but she stood before him, calm and unmoved.

"I am waiting for your decision," she said coldly.

"I must go, Felice. I have told you——"

"Then good-night, good-bye, Colonel Arnold." And, turning her back, she walked toward the house.

"Felice, don't send me away like this!"

The figure in white, with the filmy lace scarf floating from her shoulders, moved steadily on and entered the house, joining again in the gayety. All her life she had had her way and had bent every will to her own. Never before had she met with a will that refused to do her bidding. It was the sec-

ond time she had clashed with Philip's will; the first time, he had won in the end; this time, he should see.

An hour later she slipped again into the garden; she could no longer bear the sound of the gay voices and laughter. Her anger was gone. She wanted only to find Philip, to feel his arms about her, his lips on hers, to hear him whisper her name. He could go to the end of the world if he liked, and,—she would go with him. She expected to find him still pacing the garden walks; but the garden was silent and empty. She called Judy, and sent her to find him.

"Tell him I want to see him, at once, in the garden, Judy."

She waited beside the box border, impatiently plucking the leaves from the hedge. Judy returned in a few minutes.

"Jennings say Marse Arnol' done lef' a note fo' Marse Mad'son an' one for yo', en' done ride away mor'n 'our ago. Why, Missy honey chile, what de mattah?"

Felice did not answer,—she lay, a crumpled unconscious heap, on the garden path.

Philip, too crushed and heartbroken to see anyone, had written two notes, given them to Jennings to deliver: one to Mr. Madison, the other to Felice. Then, mounting a horse, had ridden away into the night, utterly miserable; in his heart cursing his father and the pledge that seemed destined to interfere always with his happiness. He did not blame

Felice,—he loved her too much,—and she was little more than a child; she could not understand.

All the night and the next day he rode on, stopping neither to eat nor rest; and for many days afterward he rode, pausing only when it was necessary to change horses and get a little sleep and food.

The days stretched into weeks, and the weeks into a month, before he reached the banks of Lake Pontchartrain, beyond which lay the city of New Orleans. On the banks of the lake he found a regiment of Kentucky volunteers, encamped for the night, on their way to join General Jackson. They were ragged and dirty, hungry and almost exhausted, after their long march from Kentucky.

"Where can I find your commander?" Arnold asked one of the soldiers.

"Back on the road about forty miles," the man answered grimly.

"What——" Before Arnold could ask his question the soldier replied:

"Fever. We buried him yesterday." And the man turned away to hide his tears.

"Anybody in command?"

"No; and we need somebody bad, too. We've buried men all along the way,—four officers, and a dozen or more privates. The fever broke out in the regiment after we started."

Arnold presented his commission as Colonel, and the ragged regiment accepted him as its commander for the rest of the journey. They had already gath-

ered together a number of boats in which to cross the lake. Arnold ordered them to rest until daylight, and then begin crossing. It took most of the day to get across, and they marched into New Orleans toward sundown, remaining there for the night. The ragged regiment attracted much attention and sympathy, and kind ladies busied themselves, and a veritable avalanche of good things to eat showered down on the camp of half-starved Kentuckians, and a goodly supply of whole garments found their way to the ragged men during the night.

At dawn the next morning, with Arnold at their head, they started for General Jackson's camp, on the McCarty plantation, nine miles below the city.

The morning after Philip's hasty departure from Montpelier, Felice, after a sleepless night, arose pale and crushed, but determined. During the long hours of the night her woman's soul had awakened, and she found herself wondering at the foolish, angry girl she had been the night before. She began to realize that true love between two persons meant constant sacrifice and compromise on the part of each,—neither the one nor the other could be supreme. Over and over again had she read Philip's hastily scrawled note:

"You are right,—it is best that I should go to-night. I had no right to marry you; I was not free! I am bound with the fetters of a pledge I cannot break. Perhaps, at New Orleans a British bullet may release me,—and you at the same time. If not,—ask your uncle,—there must be some way you may obtain your freedom. Good-bye—my—wife—for—a—day. I love you better than life itself."

With Judy's help, she bathed and dressed, drank some hot coffee to steady her nerves, and sent for her uncle. In a few simple words she told him what had passed between her and Philip the evening before. Mr. Lee listened gravely.

"You were wrong, my child,—very wrong,—to send him away like that."

"I know; but it is too late to talk of that now. I must go to find him. I must overtake him."

"But, my child; he has a good twelve hours' or more start. He is a soldier, riding faster than you can possibly go. You cannot overtake him."

"Then I shall follow him all the way."

"You do not realize what that means, Felice,—weeks of hard riding over rough roads. It is too much for a delicate girl to undertake."

"Uncle Maurice, I am no longer the delicate, foolish girl I was last night when I wounded my mate heartlessly. This morning I am a woman, going to heal that wound with tears of repentance. I must go. If the journey is too long for you,——"

"No, no; my child. I was thinking only of you. I am used to hard riding and long journeys. If you go, I go with you."

Mr. Lee was impressed by the girl's calm earnestness, and felt that, as she said, this was no foolish girl's whim.

"Can you start at once?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied without further argument.

An hour later they were on their way; faithful Judy, having refused to be left behind, accompanying

them. They followed the road Philip had taken, inquiring for him at every inn and tavern, and always he was a few days ahead of them. At one place he had passed only the day before; at first they made good time, and Felice stood the riding well, upheld by the feverish excitement of almost overtaking Philip and being so near to him. But gradually the strain told on her, and her strength began to fail. Her uncle insisted that they must ride more slowly and rest longer. So the days stretched into weeks and they gave up all hope of overtaking Philip. Each night, and many times during the day, Felice, white-faced and miserable, prayed God to keep him safe, to protect him from British bullets, until she should see him again.

CHAPTER XXV

WITHIN THE AMERICAN LINES AND THE BRITISH

When Arnold and his ragged Kentucky volunteers reached the McCarty plantation, nine miles below New Orleans, he reported at once to General Jackson. The General was in a second story chamber, seated before a desk, with papers, maps, and charts spread out before him.

"Ah, Philip, my boy!" he said affectionately, rising and putting his arm about the young man's shoulder, "I knew you would come. I knew I could depend on you."

Philip reddened as he thought of how nearly he had failed to come.

"Sit down and tell me what you have been doing these months. Have you taken my parting advice?"

The General looked just the same as when Arnold had last seen him: wearing the same blue Spanish coat, frayed trousers, and rusty high boots. But one forgot his clothes, and thought only of his dominant personality, the fine head with its shock of iron-grey hair, the honest face, seamed and stern; and occasionally,—as now when he looked at his handsome adopted son,—affectionate and kindly.

"Yes, I was married the day I received your message; and came away at once."

"And a pleasant honeymoon you must have had, alone on the road between here and Washington. I am sorry, Philip, to have interfered, but I need you here. I hope to finish this business shortly, and send you back to your bride."

Arnold said nothing further about his marriage, but told the general of the capture and burning of Washington, and of his experience with Mr. Key during the attack on Fort McHenry.

An aide opened the door and announced that Capt. Jean Lafitte desired a word with General Jackson; ushering in a handsome young man, in picturesque red shirt, blue trousers, and broad black belt. He removed his large beaver hat, with a flourish, and saluted the general respectfully:

"I desire a few words alone with you, General."

"You need not mind Colonel Arnold," replied General Jackson; "he is my confidential aide. Captain Lafitte, Colonel Arnold. You have probably heard of each other." Philip bowed, eying the young man curiously. He had heard of the Pirate of Barataria Bay, called the boldest buccaneer since the days of Captain Kidd, but he had not expected to see him so young, handsome, and courteous.

The pirate bowed again, and taking a paper from his broad belt, handed it to General Jackson.

"That, as you see, sir, is an offer from the British of thirty thousand dollars and the command of a fine ship, if I will aid them in their attack on New Orleans. I show you this that you may see it is not money I want. It is not because of any love for you

and the Americans that I desire to aid you; but I have two reasons: one is, I hate the British; they were most,—ah,—unkind to me once, and I have never forgotten; the other reason is, my brother Pierre. He is imprisoned in New Orleans, and has been for many months. I would rather have his freedom than any amount of money and any number of fine ships. My proposition is this: If you will obtain my brother's release from prison, my trusties and I are at your service in any way you desire to use us against the British. I will do anything to gain Pierre's freedom. He is young, and very dependent on me,—and the only person in the world who loves me."

There was a tender tone in the pirate's voice as he spoke of his brother.

Jackson was silent for a moment, drumming nervously on the desk with his knuckles.

"Philip, what is your opinion of this proposition? Should I accept it?"

"My opinion, sir, if you wish it, is that you should. We have not hesitated to accept aid from Indians and other offenders against the law. I can see no reason for rejecting Captain Lafitte's offer, provided, of course, you are convinced of his sincerity."

"Are *you* convinced of it?" asked General Jackson.

Arnold looked into the clear hazel eyes of the young buccaneer, and they met his unflinchingly. In them he saw love of adventure, greed for money, defiance of law,—but not treachery. Almost every

other crime perhaps,—but not that. He would meet his foe boldly and brazenly in the open, but he would not stab him in the back.

"Yes," Arnold replied, "I am convinced of his absolute sincerity."

"And so am I. Very well, Lafitte; you may bring your men and report for duty at once."

"Thank you, General. We will be here in a few hours. And may I thank you and Colonel Arnold for your confidence in my word? My reputation would not lead many men to trust me; but, I assure you, your confidence will be rewarded, in so far as my men and I are able to serve you. I bid you good-bye."

With another low bow, and flourish of the beaver hat, he retired.

"Come, Philip; see what you think of my defense."

The General, with a pair of field glasses, led the way to the garret of the house. Handing the glasses to Philip, he explained his plans.

In front of the house, some distance away, was an old dry canal, running from the swamps on the banks of Lake Borgne on the east to the Mississippi on the west. On the near bank of this canal, Jackson had built a fortification, ten feet high, of timber and mud, and bales of cotton,—an almost impregnable breastwork.

"The British army can't reach New Orleans without crossing that wall; and we are going to see that they don't cross it," said Jackson.

Some distance on the other side of the canal, on

the Villere plantation with its large white mansion house, was encamped the British army. Arnold could see the tents and fires, the soldiers moving about, and here and there an officer on horseback.

"It is a most excellent defense, General. I see no danger of the British capturing New Orleans, no matter how large a force they may have."

"No,—by the Eternal!—and they're goin' to lose a lot of their force, too. They won't get any of our men,—we are too well protected; and they aren't going to have much chance to shoot. You report to General Coffee, with your Kentucky volunteers, and he'll show you where to station them. By the Eternal, I'm glad to see you again, my boy, and I'm glad you have taken my advice! Being married will make you more of a man than ever. I hope before long to send you back to your wife. And I hope to get back to mine. It is more than a year, now, since I have seen her; and God knows I am homesick for her." The fierce eyes filled with tears as he continued: "She is the finest little woman in the world, Philip,—much too good for an old sinner like me. For years her health has been bad. I would rather face the British army single handed, than the thought that some day,—and I'm afraid before long,—I'm going to lose that little woman. Well, go ahead now, and get your dinner, and see General Coffee. And, Philip, come back this evening. I want to talk to you. I've been a lonesome old man since you left."

"Thank you, sir; I will come. When do you think

the British will make the attempt to capture the city?"

"I can't tell; they are waiting for something; I think, reinforcements. I hope they won't keep us waiting much longer. My men are gettin' impatient."

For two weeks the American army waited in idleness behind their breastworks, and still the British remained in camp, showing no signs of making an attack. Arnold spent much of the time with General Jackson, and the bond of love and sympathy between the two men became stronger and stronger; and Arnold was profoundly grateful for this bond of affection. Since his parting with Felice he had thought of her with tenderness and longing and undying love, but without hope. She had sent him away in anger,—perhaps to his death. He had no hope that she would relent.

Early one morning the camp was thrown into a state of excitement by the arrival of a negro, who had escaped from the Villere plantation. General Pakenham had arrived, he reported, with two thousand men, to take command of the British forces. General Jackson,—with Philip, General Coffee, and several other officers,—hurried to the garret. Through the field glasses they could see the British camp in a state of confusion and unrest.

"So that is what they were waiting for," said General Jackson. "Pakenham is a brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington, and has been with him in the conflict against Napoleon. That makes eight thou-

sand men they have now, and we have only four thousand. Well, boys, that means an attack soon. But we're ready for 'em, and,—by the Eternal!—they won't cross that wall."

The British camp was all astir. General Pakenham had arrived! Pakenham, who had so ably assisted his brother-in-law, the Duke of Wellington, in the Peninsular War. The British forces, in striking contrast to the ragged nondescript army on the other side of the canal, presented a splendid appearance, in their handsome scarlet uniforms; the Scotch Highlanders in gay plaids and bonnets, the officers decorated in gold lace and braid.

The General and his reinforcements were given a royal welcome, and there was much shouting and rejoicing and greeting of friends; but the most cordial and affectionate greeting General Pakenham received was from his young nephew and namesake,—Captain Edward Carlisle. This young officer remained at his side as he entered the mansion and settled himself there, making it his headquarters.

"Well, Edward, my boy, how has America been treating you? Very well, I should judge, by your thriving appearance. Have you heard from your mother recently?"

"No, sir, and I have never quite forgiven her for persuading you to send me off over here, instead of taking me with you to the Peninsular War."

The General laughed good-naturedly.

"Your mother adores you, boy. You are all she has in the world, and there seemed less danger of

your being shot over here. And you see I was right; they haven't shot you."

"No, and they won't, unless they get you; then I'll go along to keep you company. I'd rather be dead with you than alive without you."

All his life Edward Carlisle had worshipped his uncle; to him General Pakenham was perfect; he could do no wrong. General Pakenham was a vigorous, forceful man of thirty-seven, in the prime of life and at the height of his achievement. He was the younger man's ideal of a man and a soldier.

Pakenham placed his arm about his nephew's shoulders affectionately.

"They aren't going to get either of us," he said confidently. "We will finish up this affair in quick order, capture the little town of New Orleans, and celebrate your birthday next week with the best dinner the tavern can produce,—and I understand they have something of a reputation for good dinners."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SPOT OF SCARLET

It was past midnight, and the American army lay fast asleep. In the drawing-room of the mansion, General Jackson was slumbering on a couch; his aides, with belts unbuckled and arms laid aside, were stretched on the floor. Soon the General awoke, and looked at his watch.

"Gentlemen!" he called, "we have slept long enough."

The aides were awake and alert on the instant. Buckling their belts, and taking their swords and pistols, they soon aroused the whole army. By four o'clock, every man was in the place assigned to him.

Near the center of the breastworks were the Tennessee sharpshooters and Kentucky riflemen. General Jackson mounted to the garret of the house, and, with field glasses in hand, waited for the first streak of dawn, to see what the light would reveal in the enemy's camp.

The British, too, were astir, and by four o'clock were in position, waiting for the daylight and the rocket, which was to be the signal for attack. General Pakenham, mounted on a white horse, rode about, giving orders,—young Edward Carlisle, on a

pony, at his side. He ordered the Forty-fourth Regiment to march ahead with the fascines and ladders, to be used in crossing the canal and mounting the breastworks. As the first grey light appeared in the east, a rocket flashed into the air from the British camp, and the order passed: "Forward!"

General Jackson, straining his eyes with the field glasses, watched eagerly as the grey dawn spread and the light slowly penetrated the mists from the river and swamp. He saw the rocket flash into the air, and a little later distinguished a vivid line of scarlet moving steadily toward the open canal. He dropped the field glasses, hurried out, and mounting a pony, rode rapidly along the lines.

"The Red-coats are coming! Give it to 'em, boys, and,—by the Eternal!—we'll finish this business today."

The British marched straight toward the center of the breastworks, in range of the Kentucky rifles and Tennessee sharp-shooters.

"Don't waste your ammunition!" Arnold shouted to his men. "Make every shot tell!"

As soon as the scarlet line reached the opposite bank of the canal came the order: "Fire!" And every shot told; the front line of scarlet coats went down like a flash; others took their places.

"Fire!"

Again the front line went down.

The Forty-fourth Regiment, in the dim light and the confusion, had failed to take with them the ladders and fascines; the British were unable to cross

the canal; they stood waiting helplessly in range of the American guns until the delinquent Forty-fourth arrived with the necessary fascines to cross the canal and the ladders to mount the breastworks.

Hundreds were wounded and killed, and fell into the canal. The Americans shot steadily; their constant fire cutting down the British lines as a scythe mows grass. General Jackson rode along his lines, shouting encouragement to the perspiring men. The band of the Battalion d'Orleans played "Yankee Doodle" and other martial melodies to encourage the men during the battle.

A company of Scotch Highlanders, giants in size and gay in plaid kilts and bonnets, marched bravely to the firing line. The Americans watched them with admiration.

"Fire!"

The brave Highlanders went down,—to the last man. General Pakenham rode to the front, shouting encouragement to his men. A shot killed his horse beneath him. Captain Carlisle dismounted, giving his uncle the black pony. Another shot killed the pony; another, and the General's right arm hung helpless at his side. He did not seem to notice, but went on shouting to his men. A moment later he fell into his nephew's arms, mortally wounded. With the help of another aide, Carlisle carried the groaning, suffering general to the rear, laid him gently under a great live-oak tree, and sent for the surgeon.

"I've fought my last fight, Edward," he groaned

in agony, and lapsed into unconsciousness. When the surgeon arrived, it was too late; he was already dead. Young Carlisle, on his knees beside his idolized uncle, sobbed like a child, almost crazed with grief. After a time the sobs ceased, and he cursed the Americans angrily. A sudden purpose seized him.

"They have killed my general," he whispered, an angry light in his eyes. "By fair means, or foul, I will kill theirs."

He joined the next advancing scarlet line, crossed the canal without being shot, and crouching close to the breastworks for protection, crept slowly along the wall.

A man bearing a flag of truce appeared on the British side of the canal.

"Cease firing!" came the order along the American lines. The British desired time to remove and care for their wounded. General Jackson granted their request.

The Americans were shouting joyfully over their victory; their bands were playing jubilantly. But when the smoke lifted from the field of battle, the American army ceased rejoicing, and shuddered at the sights revealed there. The canal was half filled with the bodies of dead and wounded; the field beyond was covered with the fallen in scarlet uniforms; the air was heavy with the groans and cries of the wounded. Two thousand British had gone down, and only eight Americans. It was a glorious victory for the Stars and Stripes. But the ragged,

begrimed Americans forgot the glory of the victory, and asked permission to aid in caring for the wounded. They climbed over the breastworks and returned, many of them bearing on their back the wounded Red-coats, who received every care and attention within the American lines.

Captain Carlisle crept along the breastworks, until he found an opening between two timbers large enough for him to wriggle his lithe body into. With the aid of a sharp knife, he cut and scratched and tore the opening farther into the wall. It was slow, hard work, and he labored with such frenzied energy that he had to stop often to rest. But he worked on madly at his almost impossible task. There was very little air in those close quarters; the smoke from the smoldering cotton bales set on fire by bullets nearly choked him, but he worked on with the strength of a madman. He was almost exhausted, and all but suffocated, when at last he found a little breathing space between two bales of cotton, and, peeping through, saw the American lines.

The bands were playing a national air. General Jackson, with Captain Lafitte, General Coffee, Colonel Arnold, and several of his aides, walked along the lines, congratulating the men on their splendid work.

"The battle is practically over," he said to Arnold. "It is only a question of how many more men they will let us slaughter. I think they have had enough of our fighting."

"I heard one of the wounded men say their field

officers were nearly all killed," said Lafitte. "They can't do much without officers."

Shouts of "Three Cheers for Old Hickory!" "Hurrah for General Jackson!" told the young Englishman hiding in the wall that the General was approaching, and that his chance had come. He shoved the two bales of cotton farther apart, gripped his pistol, and waited.

General Jackson paused to light his corncob pipe, removed his rough leathern cap, and ran his hand through his bushy, iron-grey hair.

"This is a great day for us," he said thoughtfully. "We've taught the British a lesson. I reckon we won't have any more trouble with 'em."

Captain Carlisle, cramped inside the wall of mud and timber, peering between the two cotton bales, looked at Jackson uncertainly.

"That must be he, though he looks more like a beggar than a conquering general. And there is my friend Captain Arnold. Fate brings us together again."

He hesitated a moment, watching General Jackson's wrinkled, careworn, honest face, with the bushy eyebrows overshadowing the fine, indomitable black eyes; he hesitated, and his hand loosened the grip on his pistol. Then came the memory of his own beloved general, suffering his death agonies under the great live-oak tree, and the mad desire to avenge his kinsman's death possessed him again. His hand tightened once more on the pistol, and his

finger curved about the trigger, as he aimed carefully for the American general's heart.

Captain Arnold, standing idly beside the General, glanced along the breastworks, and a spot of scarlet caught his eye. He watched it, wondering what made the spot of brilliant color in the mass of mud and timber and smoking cotton. Then his sharp eyes caught the gleam of the pistol. Like a flash came the thought of danger to General Jackson, and, quick as the thought, came the action. He gave the general a mighty shove,—knocking him off his feet to the ground. At the same instant came the report of the pistol and the bullet struck Arnold in the side. He fell to the ground, moaning.

Jean Lafitte's quick eyes had seen the look of terror on Arnold's face, as he realized the meaning of the scarlet spot in the wall of mud and timber, and following Philip's eyes, he, too, saw the gleam of the pistol, and his own weapon flashed, only a second after Captain Carlisle pulled the trigger.

With the help of several soldiers, he pulled away the bales of cotton, and dragged the young Englishman from his hiding place. He was a sorry-looking sight,—scarcely recognizable as the handsome young British officer. His scarlet uniform was almost in rags, and covered with dust and mud; his face and head, too, were caked with dirt, and the blood flowed freely from a wound in his head. He was quite dead when they dragged him out. Captain Edward Carlisle had gone to join his beloved general.

General Jackson, after his first amazement, realized what Philip had done, and kneeling beside the wounded man, he cried like a child, and begged them to get the surgeon quickly.

When the surgeon arrived and examined the wound, he shook his head gravely.

"Not much hope, General. I can't do much for him."

The General rose to his feet, crying passionately: "By the Eternal! you've got to do something for him! Do you hear? You've got to save him! I'd rather die myself than lose this boy!"

"Let's get him into the house, and I'll do the best I can, General," the surgeon replied, moved by the General's emotion.

With the aid of Jean Lafitte, Old Hickory himself, with tears streaming down his wrinkled face, carried Philip into the house, and laid him gently on a couch.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE END,—AND THE BEGINNING

It was late in the afternoon. The surgeon had done everything he could to relieve and save Captain Arnold, who lay unconscious on the couch, pale as death, but still breathing. The men stood about in silence,—General Jackson, Jean Lafitte, General Coffee, and a few others,—watching the wounded man, and—waiting. On the General's weather-beaten face were signs of great suffering, and in his heart he offered a silent prayer for the life of this boy he had learned to love. It was the first time he had ever prayed, the first time he had ever acknowledged the existence of a God to whom he could pray. Never before in his life had he faced a situation before which he was so helpless. Now he felt that somehow there must be a Power above on whom he could call for aid. And from that hour his belief in the Power grew and strengthened.

Just before sundown two horses,—their riders travel-stained and weary,—galloped up to the mansion. On them were Felice and her uncle. The man's face showed signs of weariness and exhaustion, and the girl's was white and drawn from great mental suffering. All day they had ridden hard and long; even Mr. Lee, accustomed to such riding,

was almost exhausted. Poor Judy, unable to ride farther, had dropped behind at New Orleans. Felice, however, seemed unconscious of anything but her desire to reach her husband's side.

"He has been wounded," she felt and said that morning. "I must see him, and speak to him before he dies." And no amount of argument on the part of her uncle could move her.

"It is just your imagination, my dear; Philip is probably safe and well," Mr. Lee replied, touched by her pathetic suffering.

"No," she replied firmly, "I know he has been wounded. I must reach him to-day."

And so she had ridden tirelessly,—on and on,—her great love seeming to give her strength to endure the long day's travel.

She slipped from her horse and hurried into the house. Instinct seemed to lead her straight to the room where Philip lay. She opened the door and entered, and apparently conscious only of the white face on the couch, went to his side, kneeling and taking his hand in hers.

"Philip," she whispered softly, "it is I,—Felice. I have come."

But Philip lay unconscious and unheeding. She raised her head, and her tragic brown eyes met those of the surgeon; he read the question in them, and shook his head slowly.

She did not appear to be surprised; it was evidently the answer she expected. Her gaze returned to her husband's pale face, and she knelt there in

silence, holding his hand in hers. The men, with tear-dimmed eyes and bowed heads, slipped quietly from the room; only the surgeon, her uncle, and General Jackson remained. The girl paid no heed to their presence; her eyes never left the unconscious face on the couch, until the general touched her gently on the arm, and she looked up at him for a moment. Never had he seen such speechless suffering and agony as was in her lovely brown eyes; in them he saw the reflection of her newly awakened woman's soul in the travail of its first sorrow. He spoke no word, but she felt the kindly, loving sympathy in his tear-streaked face, and she knew that here was a man who loved Philip. Her eyes thanked him gratefully, and she turned again to watch the pale, drawn face of her beloved husband.

The General, with the surgeon and Mr. Lee, stood by a window, now and then speaking together in low, hushed voices.

All the night Felice knelt there, holding Philip's hand in hers, scarcely daring to breathe, lest she miss one of his precious heartbeats. Mr. Lee went to her once, begging her to come away to rest; but she only shook her head, and her uncle, his own heart bleeding for her in her suffering, did not trouble her again.

Now and again she whispered Philip's name softly, listening breathlessly for some response, but none came. And all the night she prayed in her heart over and over again the same prayer:

"God in Heaven, open his eyes again, if only for a moment; let me speak to him; let me ask his forgiveness, and tell him of my love. I do not ask for his life; I do not deserve that he should live. But, Merciful Father, let me speak to him once again before he goes."

But the man did not stir; he lay pale and motionless as death, except for the slow breathing and feeble heartbeat. And Felice waited, unconscious of the long hours and her cramped, kneeling position, praying her prayer and waiting,—for a flutter of the eyelids, or some sign of returning consciousness.

This was the selfish, willful girl, who all her short life had had her own way, who had bent every one to her will, who had never known anything but happiness and pleasure. Her woman's soul had awakened, and was struggling with its first sorrow. As the good Bishop had said, it was a "strong, beautiful, womanly soul," and the very angels in heaven rejoiced at its awakening.

Just before daylight the breathing seemed to grow slower and the heartbeat more feeble. The surgeon felt Philip's pulse, and returned to the window, shaking his head gravely. "The end is very near," he whispered.

As for the wounded man, it had seemed to him, as he fell to the ground with the wound in his side, that the pain was greater than he could bear. He had not known before that there could be such terrible physical agony; and then down, down, down,

he fell through interminable blackness,—the pain seeming like a great throbbing engine in his side. He was suffocating in the inky darkness; he thought he would give anything for a small ray of light, for one breath of fresh air; but all was darkness about him, and the engine in his side throbbed on and on. Suddenly something sweet and soft and loving touched his hand; he did not know what it was; he could not understand it; but it was good to feel there in the darkness. He was grateful, and hoped that touch would endure. Somehow it helped him bear the darkness and the throbbing engine.

After what seemed endless ages all of a sudden the couch on which he lay glided slowly from the darkness into a great lighted place,—a place all filled with blooming flowers and sweet fragrance and singing birds and air fresh and invigorating. All about were many people, with happy, joyful loving faces. They were singing a joyous, beautiful chorus, and Philip wondering, realized that they were singing to him. He lay there on his back, gazing about him, listening and marveling. And then, among the many faces he saw his mother's face,—inexpressibly calm and peaceful and happy. Bending above him, she laid a cool hand on his brow, and spoke to him in a tender, loving voice.

"All is well with you, my son. Be not afraid."

He longed to raise his hand, to take her cool, soft hand in his, to touch it with his lips; but he could not move, so he tried to answer her with a smile.

Beside her appeared a shining figure in flowing white robes, the face radiant with love, and tender with compassion; and the wounded man knew this presence was the Great Physician. He laid His gentle Hand on the throbbing wound, and at the soothing touch the pain ceased at once, and the man was quiet and calm and peaceful. Philip wanted to take the gentle, healing Hand in his, and touch it with his lips, but again he found he could not move; so he smiled gratefully, and the Radiant Face seemed to understand and smiled tenderly back.

"All is well with you, my son. Be not afraid," repeated his mother's voice,—her hand still resting on his brow. "Your burden is lifted; you have paid your father's debt; you are free. Return now and fight no more; live your life in your own way,—so long as it is the right way,—but remember to follow always the straight and narrow path. And some day, when your life on earth is finished, you will come back to this beautiful place to receive your reward. Return now to your One Woman. She is waiting for you."

Arnold's couch seemed to glide from the great lighted place again into the interminable darkness, but the throbbing engine in his side had ceased, and the soft, sweet something still touched his hand.

And then, of a sudden, as the little candle that had burned faithfully all the night flickered and went out, and the morning light streamed into the room, he opened his eyes, gazing into his wife's face.

"Philip! O my husband! I have come to beg your